

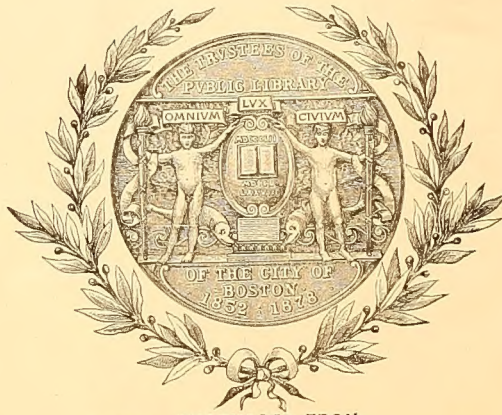


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Vol 1
(all published)
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Micéal Ó Súilleabháin

THE

Seata Tuairim

HISTORY

1949

OF

IRELAND.

BY

FERD^o. WARNER, L.L.D.

VOLUME the FIRST.

(all published)



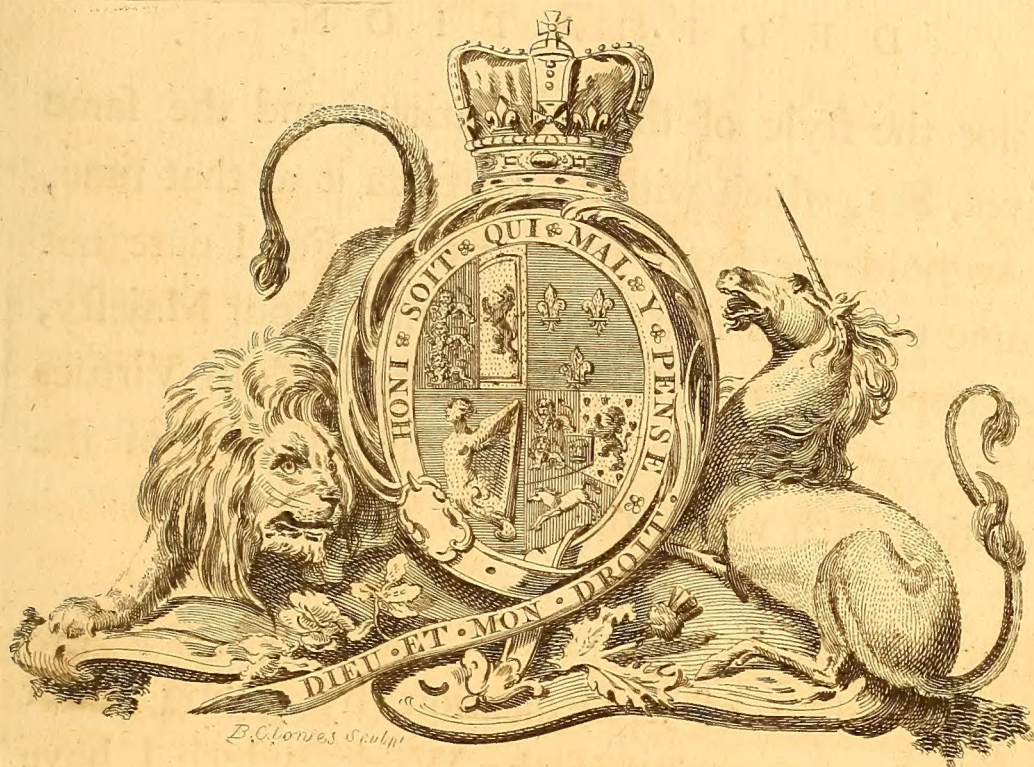
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T O

T H E K I N G.

S I R,

IN a former Work, which I presented to Your Majesty, and which You did me the Honour graciously to receive, the fashionable Mode of Address ---so foreign from the original classical Simplicity---

DEDICATION.

was not the style of the Dedication ; and the same motives, SIR, which withheld me from it at that time, will withhold me from it for ever. For I dare not presume to pay so ill a Compliment to Your Majesty, as to suppose it necessary to proclaim Your Virtues to the world, or to inform Your Majesty of the veneration with which the world beholds them.

But I hope, SIR, You will permit me to pursue the true design of a Dedication, by giving Your Majesty some account of the Work, which I have the honour now to lay before You, and by entreating Your Majesty's acceptance of it.---The whole Work intended, SIR, is a general history of Ireland from the earliest records of time, to the final settlement of that country, at the close of the last century, by King WILLIAM. But, SIR, the particular business of this Volume, after a full account of the ancient and present state of Ireland, civil and ecclesiastical, is to illustrate the great exploits of some of Your Majesty's Royal Ancestors, Monarchs of that Island, and to serve the cause of liberty by an instructive
history

D E D I C A T I O N.

history of the consequences of its abuse. To whom, then, SIR, could I address myself for a patronage of this Work, with so much propriety, as to Your Majesty? Your Majesty's patronage, indeed, it is well known, will always be an honour to any Work, and a protection to any Writer ; and may therefore be solicited on all occasions very properly.

But this, SIR, is a Work, which not only exposes the fatal politicks of early ages, and so will throw a lustre on Your Majesty's happy reign, but which also traces out in the course of it Your Majesty's own descent from a line of illustrious Heroes : And tho' the crown of Ireland hath been annexed to the diadem which Your Majesty wears, for almost six hundred years, yet these Heroes, SIR, are but little, or not at all, known or heard of in your native Country. Your native Country, permit me, GREAT SIR, to say, remarkable as it is for good sense and benevolence, looks rather with an eye of prejudice and contempt on that deserving province;---a province of far greater importance and utility to this nation, than almost all
the

DEDICATION.

the other provinces together in the whole British empire: And when Your Majesty is informed that no general history, either edifying or impartial, of that great branch of your dominions is already extant, I flatter myself that the whole Work which I have undertaken will be agreeable to Your Majesty, and attract Your notice.

The whole undertaking, SIR, it must be allowed, is very arduous, and the execution of it must necessarily be painful and expensive. But convinced, SIR, as I am, that the service of the Publick is every man's real duty, no discouragements of any kind have prevented my performing it, to the best of my abilities, on all occasions that have fallen in my way. Knowing therefore, SIR, the very imperfect, or rather the false idea that we Britons have conceived of Ireland, and the prejudice which many of its natives have entertained of some revolutions in their government, it appeared to me that such a history was equally necessary and beneficial to all Your Majesty's subjects: as such I undertook it, and as such I hope I shall be enabled to complete it.

To

D E D I C A T I O N.

To the consideration of Your Majesty it is now submitted; and happy shall I esteem myself if it meets with that approbation from Your Majesty, which Your great benevolence inclines You to bestow on all undertakings of utility to the Publick.

That Your Majesty may long, very long, continue to be a blessing to all Your People, and that all Your People may persevere in their loyalty and affection to so Great and Good a King, is the ardent prayer of,

S I R,

Your Majesty's

most dutiful,

most devoted subject,

FERDINANDO WARNER.

P R E F A C E.

IN gathering up materials for the Ecclesiastical History of England, which I had the honour to give the publick about six years ago, it was necessary to have recourse to the Irish History; as a great part of this kingdom owed its first instructions in Christianity to the pious labours and learning of Divines from Ireland. But after many enquiries, and much search, I found, to my great surprize, that there was no tolerable History of Ireland extant, either in that country or in this. By what fatality it had happened, that such a work had been hitherto so much neglected, or, to speak more properly, abandoned by men of letters, I did not know. But it appeared to me to be a Work which was capable of affording great entertainment and much knowledge; such as would be honourable to Ireland, and useful to the world. That was evidently, however, the only country now in Europe, which is in itself so good a subject for history, from its situation, importance, natural advantages, and inhabitants, and for which such authentic materials are to be met with, that in this age of literature is without its complete and general history; without such a history as a man of sense can study with any profit, or even read with any pleasure.

The native Irish writers, of which KEATING stands at the head, have confined themselves entirely to the ancient part of the history, before the English acquired any settlement in that country. But they all betray so

much vanity, and deal so much in the fabulous, as gives an air of romance to the whole; or, to speak of it in the most favourable and candid terms, as makes it appear to be a mythological rather than a real history. O FLAHERTY, in a Latin work which he calls *Ogygia*, has rejected many of the romantic tales adopted by other writers, and has taken infinite pains to adjust the chronology of their high antiquities; in which he has in a good measure succeeded. For his technical chronology, though not absolutely accurate, is, however, the most accurate of any we know in Europe. The reader need not be told that it can only be ascertained, as Sir I. NEWTON in a great degree ascertained his, by the generations of men and the reigns of Princes. The Latin performance of Archdeacon LYNCH, published under the title of "*Cambrensis everfus*," though it contains some curious particulars of old Irish affairs, yet is principally taken up in refuting the false and malevolent assertions of GERALD, Bishop of S. David's, called, "*Cambrensis*." But the best work that hath appeared on the ancient part of the Irish history, are the *Dissertations* on it, published lately by Mr. O CONNOR, a Gentleman of the County of Roscommon: who has had ingenuousness and honesty enough, however, to own to me, that more than the common disadvantages, to which a first publication on a dark subject is exposed, glare through the whole; neither could he answer for it, but that the warmth of youth, and the "*Amor Patriæ*," might have inclined him to extend the matter somewhat beyond the rigour, to which he should have confined himself. This acknowledgment, though it flows from a true greatness of mind, which does him honour, yet shews us, that this work is to be read with caution, and some grains of allowance for prejudice and partiality; neither is it any thing more than what the title professes, "*Dissertations on the Ancient History*."

Among the Irish writers of English extract and descent, who are to be distinguished from the natives, the first place must be given to Sir JAMES WARE; who had great opportunities, from a long residence in that country,

country, and a post of eminence in the State, to make himself acquainted with its history and antiquities ; and his work on that subject is almost the only book of the kind that has been ever read or heard of in this age in England. But though it must be owned that this writer was indefatigable in his collections, yet being a man of no great taste or genius, being ignorant of the language in which his materials were composed, and having no good interpreters who understood both that and the English, he was imposed upon not a little ; and consequently the world has been misled by him. For instance, he hath cut off at a single stroke fourteen hundred years of the ancient history, by asserting roundly contrary to authentic evidence, that whatever was recorded of the times before Christianity, was nothing else but the invention of later ages. Even in the History which he pretends to give of the times posterior to that æra, we meet with nothing but a dry meagre catalogue of their Kings, through a space of almost eight hundred years ; as though nothing worthy attention was transacted in all that period. In short, though WARE had great merit in bringing forth from old fragments, which had lain neglected, many materials essential to Irish history, yet, whosoever contents himself with that production—even improved as it is by HARRIS—will have a very insufficient, and a very partial idea of the ancient state of Ireland.

Archbishop USHER, as good and as honest a man as ever lived, wore out a long life in the most painful researches into antiquity ; but they were chiefly confined to chronological and ecclesiastical subjects. Little else, however, relating to Ireland is to be found among his writings : and as far as it extends on the heads of Religion and the Church of the antient Irish, his matter is accurate and authentic ; but he also laboured under the disadvantage of bad interpreters. As to all the English writers who have attempted to give any part of the History of Ireland—such as CAMBRENSIS, CAMPION, HANMER, STANTHURST, SPENSER, MOR-

RISON, Cox, &c.—it is difficult to determine whether they shew more inaccuracy and ignorance, or malevolence and partiality. Sir RICHARD Cox is the only one who hath attempted a general history from the conquest, extended to modern times: and the reader will find much the same entertainment and instruction, by perusing the old news papers, in which the facts and events were originally recorded, as he would by looking over that history.

To enumerate or expose all the ill-grounded assertions of these several writers, with regard to the ancient history and inhabitants of the Irish nation, and which they have indulged through inattention, partiality, or malevolence, would be no difficult task, though very disagreeable and impertinent to my design. My design here is only to shew, in what a low and wretched condition the history of Ireland—a kingdom appendant to our own for almost six hundred years past—hath hitherto remained, to the disgrace of letters, and the reproach of both nations. It may be proper, however, to mention, that one notorious error runs through all the English writers on this subject, and another through all the Irish. The first, in their description of the ancient inhabitants, customs, and manners, speak of them 'till the conquest, in the same opprobrious terms which suit them only in their pristine state; when they were utterly unacquainted with agriculture, arts, and commerce, when letters were in their infancy, and when the whole world was lying in ignorance. On the other hand the Irish writers, when they speak of their Milesian ancestors, pass most of this by in silence; and talk of nothing but a succession of illustrious Princes, the splendour of their laws and government, and in short of a politeness, virtue, military glory, and generosity, which distinguished their nation from all other. Both these accounts may be said perhaps to be true; and yet for want of making the distinction, when the first ended, and the last began, they are neither of them impartial.

The many probable reasons why no writer of Ireland hath attempted to rescue its history from this condition, may be easily enough assigned. Of the old Irish stock, who understand the language in which the fragments that remain are written, few have had an education which makes them capable of writing in any other : nor would one of them be induced, I believe, to give himself any trouble about the history of Ireland, beyond the dissolution of their monarchy ; when all their splendour, as a warlike, free, and independent people, became extinguished. Even of the part prior to it, they content themselves with what hath been already published by the authors above-mentioned—though many other authorities of very ancient date, besides what are taken notice of by them, are still in the hands of the curious—because of the contempt which they see these works are held in by the English there, as well as here ; and because of the expence, too great for private persons, of collecting, explaining, and publishing these fragments ; which, after all, perhaps not fifty people in both kingdoms would have curiosity or inclination enough to peruse. This, by the way, is one answer to all those who ask, why none of the learned in Ireland, skilled in the original language, have published any authentic historical monuments of their country from their very ancient annals.

If these conjectures are sufficient to account for the silence and inactivity of the few of the Irish stock who are capable of writing history, as I think they are, then we cannot be at a loss for a reason, why no man of letters in Ireland, of the English race, hath made any attempt to illustrate and defend their ancient history. But besides what hath been said already as a discouragement from it, the people of English extraction, though their ancestors have been in possession of it almost six hundred years, yet, by a strange kind of reasoning, don't look upon Ireland as their country ; and therefore pay no more regard to its antiquities, than they do.

do to those of China or Japan. Other reasons however must be sought for, why none of the English there, who have distinguished themselves in all other kinds of learning, should ever yet have attempted to give such a general history of Ireland, since it became annexed to the crown of England, as is given of every other nation and state almost in Europe.

The subject, it must be owned, is interesting, from its importance, its novelty, the situation of the island, and its connexion with a kingdom so powerful and so flourishing as this of ours. Even in this period, the reason which has been given in the preceding paragraph will hold good, though not so strongly: for though to be born themselves in Ireland, and to enjoy estates and emoluments from father to son through several generations will make it their own country, or one does not know what will, yet the inhabitants of the English race at this day have their eye and inclination rather fixed on England as their country; and there is reason to think, generally speaking, that Ireland should be more the object of their love and attention than they are pleased to make it. It is with the utmost reluctance, because I really wish not to offend, that I have mentioned this as a reason, why no care hath been taken to give the world such a general history of their nation under the English government, as should be edifying, important, and entertaining: and if truth was not superior with me to all other considerations, I would suppress as another reason, that the people of Ireland in general, 'till within these few years, were the least lovers of books, and spent the least time in reading, of any civilized people perhaps under the sun [a].

But another reason, and probably the most important, is yet behind. Though there are numerous and authentic materials for history during this period to be found in Ireland, among the rolls and journals of parliament,

[a] A letter, which I was honoured with from a late learned Irish Prelate, is my authority for this assertion.

among the acts and orders of council, among the records of state and the rolls of chancery, as well as in the public and private libraries, yet a much greater number remain in England; in the council and secretaries offices, in the Museum and the Tower, in the Bodleian and Lambeth libraries, and in the cabinets of the curious. For a man of letters therefore in Ireland, to come over to this country, and to remain in it so long as to inspect all these materials and make extracts from them—even supposing his access to them to be made ever so easy,—would be a very troublesome undertaking; and much too expensive to be engaged in on his own account, or for the small price which is paid for literary compositions.

Whether these which I have now assigned are the true and only reasons, why no writer of Ireland hath hitherto attempted to rescue its history from that disgraceful and wretched condition in which it lies, I will not take upon me to determine. I must own that they appear to me very sufficient for that purpose; and the reader must allow that they are highly probable. Indeed they appear to be so very sufficient, that upon a review of what has been said, I am not without apprehension it will be thought great presumption in me—a stranger to the language and country of Ireland—to attempt the arduous work of writing its general history. The reader however is desired to suspend his judgment, 'till he has seen what is to be said in justification of this attempt, as well as the steps taken for carrying it into execution with success.

It may be remembered that I have said already in the beginning, that upon the strictest search into the history of Ireland, which I was necessarily obliged to make, I had found there was nothing tolerable of that kind extant; and yet that it appeared a work which was capable of affording great entertainment and much knowledge. Led by these observations to talk over the subject of Irish history with several of the first distinction in that kingdom
resident

resident in England, I found them not more concerned at the pitiful obscure state of it, than desirous that I would write a new general history from the earliest records of time: nor did they fail to give me encouragement, by promises of their countenance and best assistance in the undertaking.

From the various conversations which I had on this subject with men of letters and taste in my own country, and from the histories of Ireland which had been published here, it appeared to me that the people of England of all ranks, generally speaking, had either no other knowledge of that kingdom, than that it was an island subject to Great Britain; or, what is worse than no knowledge, they had got the falsest notions, and conceived the strongest contempt and most groundless prejudices, that ever filled the heads, or entered the hearts of one civilized people about another. Who would think then, if they did not know it, that the literary amusement of men of politeness, which of late years has been most in fashion—and one wonders it should be so long neglected—hath been the history of all the countries upon the globe? This is a circumstance which will obviate one of the discouragements to a work of this kind in Ireland above-mentioned: but it is principally taken notice of in this place to shew, how very shameful and absurd it is to take pains to know as much as we can of the history of every other nation, and at the same time to be utter strangers to that which belongs to ourselves, and which may not improperly be called our own. This is an evident proof, I think, of the seasonableness and the necessity of the present work. Besides, though the history of Ireland—to use the words of Lord BOLINGBROKE—“ will contribute extremely to keep our minds free from a ridiculous partiality in favour of our own country, and a vicious prejudice against others, yet it will create in us a preference of affection towards our own”.

Convinced

Convinced as I was from these considerations of the truth of what had been said to me by a person of an eminent station in that country, "that there was no one point of literature so much wanted in England as a good Irish history," the difficulties which attended it did not affright me. I had experienced the patience and industry which it requires, to dig in the rubbish and obscurity of ancient authors, covered with the rust of time and involved in fable and tradition : and if any conclusion was to be drawn from the approbation given to my Church History, by those whose approbation was a sufficient proof of the merit of any work, I might conclude without arrogance, that I had judgment enough to discern, what is fit to be told, and what to be let alone ; and above all, that I was possessed of candor and impartiality, which it can be no vanity to boast of, because in an historian it is the greatest vice to want them.

These several circumstances induced me, I hope not unreasonably, to undertake the general history of Ireland : and as soon as I was determined, I employed a great deal of time and was at much expence for some years, in collecting all the books that had been published, both in England and in Ireland, which directly or indirectly related to this subject. They were all as open to me, as to any Irish writer ; and as much a stranger as I was to the language and the country, the same application would make me master of their contents, being none of them written in Irish. My situation, moreover, would give me an advantage, with regard to the manuscripts, records, and collections here in England ; which an historian of that nation, without residing here for a long time, could not obtain, nor make use of.

The only obstruction that stood in my way, were the manuscript materials in the public offices and libraries of Ireland yet untouched ; and which were all of them as important as they were authentic. To remove this ob-

struction as well as I could, I addressed a letter to the nobility and gentry of Ireland, published twice in the Dublin Journal in May 1761,—copies of which I sent to every Irish Peer in this country—informing them of my undertaking, and entreating their assistance in it. In particular, I presumed to make a request to the Dublin Society, for all those papers that had been collected towards a general history by Mr. HARRIS, of which the Irish house of commons had granted money for the purchase, a few years before. The Dublin Society, the most respectable body of men in that kingdom, next the Parliament, many of which are its members, held an extraordinary board at the request of the Earl of CLANBRASSILL, to consider of that application: at this board it was agreed that his Lordship should be wrote to, to let me know, “ that as a general history of Ireland was much desired by that society, and they could not remit their manuscripts without an order of the house of Commons, so if I would go over thither, they would make me a present towards the expences of my journey, and I should have free access to all the papers in their possession, and every other assistance which they could give to my undertaking:” nor did they omit to suggest the great advantage of such an expedition, in furnishing myself with all the other materials that were to be found in Dublin.

Upon this invitation and encouragement, and in order to make the work as complete as possible—notwithstanding the infirmities of a very gouty constitution—I went over at the meeting of their Parliament in sixty one. The Dublin Society, as I expected, kept their word: and as the late Mr. HARRIS, in those collections which they had purchased, had copied all the records in the Birmingham Tower and the Rolls of Chancery necessary to my undertaking, a great deal of time and trouble were saved me in the pursuit of them. The Provost and Fellows of Trinity College were so kind as to dispense with the statutes that concerned their manuscripts in my favour; and to accommodate me for several weeks in the perusal of them
in

in a very unprecedented handsome manner.—To the private thanks which I then gave these two learned bodies, I beg leave to add my public acknowledgments in this place.

The books in the Council Office were a source of excellent materials for Irish history, which no one before me had ever had recourse to for that purpose : and by the polite behaviour of the clarks, and the labour of Dr. LYON, Prebendary of St. Patrick's, who had made a general catalogue, and an index to every volume, my time for some weeks was spent there very agreeably, and my trouble greatly lessened. The public library at St. Sepulchre's did not abound with manuscripts usefull or important to a general history ; but such as were there I had free access to.

The kind and courteous treatment of the Marquis of KILDARE ; the free and condescending manner in which the Lord Viscount JOCELYN was pleased to honour me with his information and his papers ; the zeal and friendship of the good Bishop of WATERFORD in every instance where they could be of use ; the polite and goodnatured reception and advice of the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons ;—the civility of the Earl of CHESTERFIELD, here at home, in accommodating me with some books which I could not otherwise procure ; the alacrity and kindness with which the Earl of BESSBOROUGH encouraged the undertaking ; the singular generosity of the Lord Viscount FITZWILLIAM ; and the many friendly assistances of the Lord Viscount MIDLETON ; these all deserve the best and most public acknowledgements in my power to make : and I hope that the private friends which I found at Dublin, though their names are not mentioned, will not think themselves slighted nor their favours forgot. What other obligations in the progress of this undertaking I may have to the great and learned, both in that country and in this, it shall be my care to mention in the Preface of each respective Volume to which they belong : and when I consider that the best

regulated and politest states, have always looked upon works of this kind as worthy of their encouragement, and that, anciently such encouragement was more conspicuous in Ireland than any where else, I am not without hopes, that in the present age of knowledge and improvement in that country, the history which I shall deliver, will be thought worthy of the attention of the whole Irish nation, as well as of this in which I write. It would be cruel that its impartiality should give offence to either.

Having laid before the reader, in a manner void of all artifice, the several reasons which induced me to attempt this arduous undertaking, and the steps which have been taken for executing it with success, it is necessary that I should say something now particularly of this volume; which contains the Introduction, and the whole ancient History, from the earliest accounts of time, to the dissolution of the monarchy at the English conquest. Of the Introduction, I shall only say, that, imperfect as it may be, it has cost me more pains than can be well conceived: it may be called not improperly a political map of Ireland in its ancient and present state; and if I had compiled it only from the books, even of modern composition, which relate to that country, without going over thither myself, it would not only have been very defective, but many erroneous accounts must have been also given, which have been copied, and still continue to be copied, from one writer by another, to the present time. It may be said of it, I believe, now, that it is at least free from error. It has been submitted to the inspection of several of the nobility and gentry of that kingdom, whose approbation it hath been honoured with; and should any errors still remain, they are not committed with a design to misinform or mislead the reader.

With regard to the several periods of the antient history, comprehended in this volume, if the primæval accounts of Ireland are found to be buried

ried in the same obscurity and confusion with those of other countries, it is no more than might be expected. Their probable, if not their certain accounts, however, are to be carried higher than those of most other nations in Europe, or than we in England chuse to allow; as it is evidently proved, I think, in the following work, to which I refer. A great distinction, no doubt, is to be made, in all the ancient historical monuments of the northern nations, between the accounts they give of their antiquities, before the times in which they became cultivated, and received the use of letters, and the accounts they give of their history, since the period when letters were received amongst them.

Accordingly, the reader will find little stress laid on the uncertainty of tradition, in the times prior to those in which they had the use of letters: and even after that period, if we are obliged to strip off a great deal of fable from the materials which have been handed down, this is no more than what must be done with all other ancient profane history in the world. The circumstance to be most lamented with regard to the old Irish history, is, that the Danes, in their frequent ravages and invasions of Ireland, during the ninth and tenth centuries, burnt all the books and monuments of antiquity that fell in their way; and that what they had spared, or which were afterwards compiled, went to wreck when the English took possession of the Island, and in the many wars which they had for above two hundred years with the natives. Instead therefore of wondering at the want there is now, and for some ages hath been, of antient histories amongst the Irish, it is rather to be wondered at that they have any manuscripts or records at all remaining.

It must be owned, indeed, that a notion hath prevailed amongst them of late, from the report of a Danish gentleman, that their manuscripts and records were not all destroyed, but that a great collection in the
Irish

Irish language and character was now to be found in the library of the King of Denmark. This report, I perceived, when I was at Dublin, had made a great impression upon many of the learned Irish; who, considering that the Danes received Christianity, and of course some taste for letters in the tenth century, entertained great hopes of an acquisition to their ancient history from these manuscripts.

Though from the manners of the northern nations, during their piratical wars with Ireland, even after they became Christians, I doubted much, if they took any pains to preserve the monuments of history in the Irish archives, yet that I might leave no measure untried, to procure materials so authentic—if any such there were—I entreated his Grace the Duke of NEWCASTLE, who very obligingly complied with my request, to recommend an enquiry after them to Mr. TITLEY, the British envoy at that court. On Mr. TITLEY's application to his Danish Majesty, orders were issued for a search into all parts of the library, the archives, and the cabinets of the literati, but without effect; as the reader will see from Baron BERNSTORFF's letter below, which I was favoured with from Mr. TITLEY [a]. This letter will obviate any further hopes or expectations from that quarter: and the publick may rest assured, that the Danes carried none of the Irish manuscripts out of the island, but destroyed them

[a] Monsieur,

à Copenhague, le 1 d'Avril, 1762.

C'est à regret que je suis obligé de vous marquer, que malgré nos recherches il ne s'est trouvé, ni dans les archives du Roi, ni parmi les manuscrits de sa bibliothèque, ni dans aucun autre cabinet de nos Sçavants, des pièces qui eussent rapport à l'histoire ancienne d'Irlande, où qui pussent servir à l'ouvrage que le Dr. WARNER se propose de publier. Sa Majesté en est très fâchée, & j'ose dire, que je le suis aussi.

Je souhaite être plus heureux dans une autre occasion, & je vous prie d'être toujours très persuadé de l'empressement avec lequel j'ai l'honneur d'être,

Monsieur,

Votre très humble et

très obeissant serviteur,

BERNSTORFF.

A Monsieur Titley, Envoyé
Extraordinaire de S. M. Bri-
tannique près du Roi.

all upon the spot; as, before this report, had always been supposed. Some further light, however, might have been thrown upon the ancient history, if I had succeeded in another application that I made for a manuscript of SEDULLIUS, a Spanish Bishop, and a native of Ireland in the eighth century; which had been in the hands of Sir JOHN HIGGINS, Physician to PHILIP V. But a recovery of this work was found impracticable. Nor was I more successful in many repeated attempts to procure the papers relating to that period of the late Dr. RAYMOND, mentioned in the Introduction. Why they were withheld from me, against the consent of his son's widow, and his grandson, his legal heirs and representatives, is best known to Mr. ENRAGHT, a clergyman in the county of Carlow, to whom I am informed they had been lent.

After what has been said of the destruction of the ancient histories and records by the Danes and English, the reader will certainly be ready to ask, upon what authority then it is that any ancient history, prior to these invasions, hath been founded and given. As puzzling a question as this may be thought, it is easily to be answered, and answered with truth. The records of all public transactions, from the beginning of the Milesian monarchy, had been carefully handed down by tradition, and in the sonnets of their bards: these were afterwards made so much the concern of the state in Ireland, when their Parliament was established, and so many copies were transcribed and preserved in their public registries, that such a great number of historical monuments were not again to be found perhaps in any other nation. The care of history was one of the first cares of the government; and from the larger works in the archives, now lost, and lost for ever; portable extracts were made, which were short, and therefore easily copied and circulated, as well as easily preserved through all revolutions.

Of such materials as these, the fragments that now remain, the annals, and poetical compositions principally consist. The greatest part of these have been translated and published by KEATING, O FLAHERTY, WARE, LYNCH, or Mr. O CONNOR ; and they are the chief authorities which have been consulted in compiling the ancient history ; as the reader will see in the margin at the beginning of every book [b]. Very early indeed, in my search after materials for this undertaking, I found and purchased a large historical manuscript of that period ; wrote evidently by a native of Ireland, who understood the language, and who had had the inspection of most of the fragments mentioned by those writers. But from such short records as these, the characters of the principal persons who figured on the public stage, and the latent springs of action, which are the soul of history, must not be looked for : they are only to be collected from the genius of the times, the ruling manners, and some striking circumstances, which afford a glimmering light through the darkness that surrounds them. Amidst a barrenness of such facts as best reward the labours of an historian, it is hoped that the reader will be so candid as not to expect any great entertainment or instruction. If I have separated truth from fable, omitted all impertinent trifles, and avoided the credulity and partiality of other writers of this period ; if I have dwelled principally upon those events, which are interesting to mankind in every age of the world ; and if the facts are ranged and connected with a tolerable precision, as well as enlivened with those reflections which answer the noblest end of history ; in short, if I make the best use of the matter I have, it is all that can reasonably be expected here : for the business of an historian is not to create matter, but to illustrate what he meets with, and to relate it truly ; and if it exhibits little more than a picture of the outrages and

[b] The authorities in the Ninth Book, which are the same as those in the Eighth, are omitted, through mistake.

distresses of mankind, it is not his fault, but the fault of the times and people of which he writes.

Of the manner in which I have acquitted myself in the several particulars above-mentioned, none of my readers however can form a judgment, but such as have perused the works already published of this period: and it will be very unjust that I should be condemned by other readers, for not giving them better matter, when better matter was not to be had. But yet broken, defective, and dry as the matter is, the ancient history of Ireland given in this volume, which may properly enough be called, the history of the abuse of liberty, is so edifying and important to a free people, as that few subjects merit their attention more, and scarcely any can afford instructions of greater political use. Were there no other circumstance attending it, than the continued infelicity of that kingdom, through a period of two thousand years, which is now the chief member of the British Empire, it would justly excite the curiosity of every person conversant in letters.

But there is a further circumstance to recommend this ancient history to our attention; which is the great light it throws on the primæval accounts of Scotland, that hath given us Kings for an hundred and fifty years past, and is now united and in subjection to the crown of England. Were it not for the ancient records preserved in Ireland, the whole first period of the Scottish history would be a blank; or quite enveloped in ignorance and barbarism. Accordingly the Scotch historians, for want of being acquainted with the language and writings of their mother country, have many of them given a fabulous, and the best of them a very imperfect and obscure account of their origin and antiquity. Should this volume therefore afford the reader no other instruction, it will shew him that Ireland was the parent country of the Scotch; it will trace out the royal line of the sovereigns of Great Britain in its descent from the Irish monarchs; it will give him an idea of the real
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origin,

origin, language, learning, and first constitution of government of those northern people; it will set the honour and power of their ancient nobility in their proper light; and, in short, it will rescue their remote antiquities, from that obscurity and oblivion in which some of their own writers have involved them. As to those who are assuming or weak enough to insist on the historical truth of a poetical romance, lately picked up in fragments nobody knows where, nor how preserved and handed down, in opposition to the whole tenour of the best histories of their own country, as well as those of Ireland, they merit no confutation. Upon the whole, need any thing further to be suggested, in order to convince the reader, that this ancient part of the Irish history, is edifying to Britons and a proper object of their attention? I think verily there does not.

But before I conclude, it may be necessary to observe, that there is some difficulty in understanding the high antiquities of the Irish nation, from the very different manner in which the names of Monarchs, Princes and Places, are spelled and written by different authors. These names originally were Celtic; and growing into disuse in process of time with the generality, the modern writers have so altered some of them from their original and from their orthography by other writers, as to occasion great confusion, and even to make it difficult to know, that they are the same as what we meet with in their ancient chronicles, and other modern compositions. Thus for instance, the royal palace of their monarchs, which in all their annals and records is called Teamor, by different authors hath been styled Thamor, Teamhra, Temora, and most generally, though most corruptly, Tara. Even O'FLAHERTY himself, to instance in no other word, hath latiniz'd Aonghus in too arbitrary a manner, by converting it into Æneas, instead of Angus; which would preserve the root and at the same time not found amiss.

In this, and many other difficulties that I have met with, I had recourse to Mr. O'CONNOR, the ingenious author of the dissertations mentioned above; to whom I desire to make a public acknowledgement for the great trouble that I have given him. His advice upon this occasion, was to write the names as near the pronunciation of them as possible, consistently with the necessity of preserving some radical letters. This he confesses would render the sound in some places a little uncouth; as an English reader would not know, which letters were to be pronounced, and which to be suppressed: and yet a licence of another kind would destroy all etymology, without mending the matter, except to an English ear. But there is no preventing inconveniences on this head, till some common standard is fixed for avoiding the mistakes, to which the spelling of exotic names is subject. However, as a little help to the reader, let him remember that the letter **C** in Irish is always pronounced **K**; that the letters **B H** and **M H** are the same as **V**; that **G H** sounds like **W**; and where two or more vowels are put together, that seldom more than one is pronounced.

After all, I am extremely sensible, that I have engaged in a very painful arduous undertaking: and notwithstanding the best endeavours are used, to which zeal, application, and a strong desire to please, could urge me, yet there is great reason to bespeak the candour and kind indulgence of the reader. The more he knows of the difficulties which such a performance must be attended with, the more ready he will be to pass by its defects. He will acknowledge particularly, that in so long a work, and where similar events occur so often, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to vary the form of expression always, and to prevent its becoming tiresome or disgusting by repetition.

But whatever may be the fate of this history, there are a few things which I shall beg leave to say, and insist upon, in its defence: that there is nothing related in it but upon good authority as far as the subject would admit of it, and faithfully reported; nothing argued for with a partial affection to one country, or with a prejudice against the other; and nothing contained in any part of it, which deviates from the true and noblest end of history, the persuading mankind to wisdom, liberty, and religion.



EXPLANATION

OF THE

Authorities mentioned in the Margin, from which
this Volume was principally compiled.

- HUTCHIN. A Defence of ancient Historians by Bishop HUTCHINSON; Oct°.
- Dissertat.* Dissertations on the ancient History of Ireland—no name—by CHARLES O'CONNOR, Esq; Oct°.
- KEATING. A general History of Ireland, by G. KEATING, D.D. translated into English; Fol.
- MS. A manuscript History of Ireland, written in English by one of the old natives, in my possession; Fol.
- NICHOLSON. The Irish Historical Library, by WILLIAM, Lord Bishop of Derry; Oct°.
- O FFAHERTY Ogygia, &c. Auctore R. O FLAHERTY, Arm°. Q^{to}.
- HOLLINGSH. The Chronicles of Ireland by HOLLINGSHEAD; containing G. CAMBRENSIS's two books of its history, translated—STANIHURST's English description of it—HOLLINGSHEAD's continuation of its history, from CAMPION and others—and a supplement by HOOKER, Vol. 2d. Fol.
- WARE Sir JAMES WARE's History and Antiquities of Ireland, civil and ecclesiastical, with additions, by W. HARRIS, Esq; 2 vols. Fol.

COMERF.

- COMERF. The History of Ireland, to the invasion of the English, by T. COMERFORD, Esq; Oct^o.
- CAMDEN. Britannia; containing a description of Ireland, and some Annals, by WILLIAM CAMDEN, Esq; Fol.
- Univ. Hist.* An Universal History, from the earliest account of time, 21 vols. Oct^o.
- BOATE The Natural History of Ireland, by G. BOATE, M. D. Q^{to}.
- PETTY The Political Anatomy of Ireland, by Sir W. PETTY; Oct^o.
- BOLTON The Present State of Great Britain and Ireland, by Mr. BOLTON; Oct^o.
- SMITH The Ancient and Present State of the Counties of Cork, Kerry, &c. by CHARLES SMITH, M.D. 5 vols. Oct^o.
- BROWNE The Benefits which arise to a trading People from navigable Rivers, by J. BROWNE, Esq; Pamph.
- MOLYN. The Case of Ireland being bound by Acts of Parliament made in England, stated by W. MOLYNEUX, Esq; Oct^o.
- WALSH A Prospect of the State of Ireland, from the Year of the World 1756, by P. WALSH; Oct^o.
- PEZRON The Antiquities of all Nations, by the Abbé PEZRON; Oct^o.
- USHER Religion of the Ancient Irish, Q^{to}.—Sylloge Epistolar. Hibern. Q^{to}. Ecclesiast. Antiq. Brit. Q^{to}. by Primate USHER.
- DAVIES Historical Collections, or a Discovery why Ireland was never entirely subdued till JAMES I. by Sir J. DAVIES, Attorney General in Ireland to that King; in Fol. Q^{to}. and Oct^o.
- TAYLOR The History of Gavelkind, by SILAS TAYLOR, Gent. Q^{to}.
- SIMON An Essay towards an Historical Account of Irish Coins, by JAMES SIMON, F. R. S. Q^{to}.

- SPENSER A View and Perfect Discovery of Ireland, from its being first inhabited, to the year 1600, by ED. SPENCER; Oct°.
- LYNCH CAMBRENSIS EVERSUS, by GRATIANUS LUCIUS; Fol.
- MAC CURTIN A Brief Discourse in Vindication of the Antiquity of Ireland, by H. MAC CURTIN; Q°.
- HARRIS Hibernica, or some Ancient Pieces relating to Ireland, by W. HARRIS, Esq; Fo. and additions to WARE.
- REGAN A Fragment of the History of Ireland, by MAURICE REGAN; one of the pieces in Hibernica.
- RAYMOND A Letter from Dr. A. RAYMOND to Lord INCHQUIN, giving some account of the Monarchs and the ancient State of Ireland, Pamph. Oct°.—Introduction to the History of Ireland, Pamph. Fol.
- Hist. Engl.* RAPIN's History of England, translated by TINDALL.
- Anonym.* Occasional Pamphlets without any name, chiefly printed in Ireland.



The READER is entreated, before he enters upon the WORK,
to correct the following

E R R O R S.

Page 8. line 1. after *diseases* insert — l. 3. from the bottom, for *then* read *than*. p. 28. l. 5. for *sack* read *suck*. p. 31. l. 7. read *descendents* and *immunities*. l. 10. after PYM insert— l. 19. for *subduction* read *subjection*. l. 20. read the *First's*. l. 24. dele *and* after being. l. 25. add *and* after of. p. 31. l. 27. after *made* insert — p. 33. l. 7. from the bottom, dele *which*, p. 77. l. 11. read *in* council. p. 80. l. 3. after *have* insert — p. 97. l. 15. read *Bonaught*. p. 117. l. 23. for *airy* read *wry*. p. 189. l. 16. after *expressed* insert — p. 253. l. 4. read *soldiers*. p. 268. l. 29. read *not be*. p. 271. l. 6. read *Armorica*. p. 290. l. 13. for *fly* read *Hy*. p. 311. l. ult. after *monarch* insert — p. 370. l. last but two, dele *in*. p. 412. last word, for *as* read *to*. p. 418. l. 1. read *ornamental*. p. 439. l. 28. for *he* read *the*. l. 30. for *the* read *be*. p. 442. l. 2. after *against* insert *him*. p. 446. l. 4. from the bottom, after *chief*, insert — p. 464. l. 1. for *is* read *are*. p. 465. note, l. 3. for *with* read *wish*. p. 467. l. 20. after *succeeding*, make the full stop a comma. p. 482. l. 6. for *the* read *though*. p. 484. l. 3. dele *and*.

N. B. There is a mistake in the numbering of the Pages at 144, and another at 428.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is a maxim among Philosophers, that it is impossible for us to know things well, unless we know them in their beginnings: and tho we are not literally to adopt this maxim when we treat of nations and countries, because of the impossibility of finding materials which are authentic in their earliest ages, yet the nearer we are able to approach to their originals, our curiosity is better gratified, and the history is more complete. But whether we can trace a nation to a very high antiquity or not, it seems necessary to give a full and circumstantial description of it, from the time that it can be known, before we attempt to relate its history. It seems necessary to give an account of its name and origine, its climate and situation, its laws and customs, government and religion, in order to enable the reader to understand the transactions which are recorded. If it should be thought, as perhaps it may, that I have been too prolix and minute in these particulars concerning Ireland, I can only say in my justification, that it is a fault which hath arisen from the other extreme; from observing that the introductions to all the general histories which I have seen, are much too superficial; and that we are not made enough acquainted with the people, the state of the country, and their civil and religious constitution, to understand all their history as we read it. We travel through it too much like strangers; and our thoughts are taken up in finding out the meaning of what we read, instead of making proper reflexions on it. The writers seem to suppose, that because they have a thorow knowledge of their subject themselves, their readers have so likewise. And indeed for the inhabitants of a country, such a slight introduction as hath been mentioned may be sufficient. But if it is an history intended for the use of Foreigners—and we are such with regard to Ireland—it is surely very requisite to be

more circumstantial and minute. However not to take up any more time in this disquisition, which is a matter of mere opinion, I shall proceed to give the best accounts that I can meet with, of the several particulars which appear necessary to introduce an history of Ireland from the beginning.

Name.
MIL.
HOLLING.
WARE.
U. History.

There is not a greater difference among Historians about any thing relating to this island than about its name. It is very certain that it hath been called and known in ancient times by many different names, not at all resembling each other in sound or signification; and this variety of names, I apprehend, arises from its having been traded with by several nations, who have denominated it, in their own language, from its situation with respect to them — as we have done the East and the West Indies — and not from any appellations which the inhabitants gave it themselves. But as it hath been distinguished in these latter ages, by no other names than Ireland, Scotia, and Hibernia, I shall not trouble the reader with the others, nor with the strange conjectures from whence they are said to have been derived. Amongst those who pretend to account for the name Hibernia, there are scarcely two who agree together. The author of the ancient Manuscript in my possession which I have mentioned in the preface, says, that the sons of MILESIVS who invaded the island gave it this name, either from the river Iberus in Spain from whence they came, or from HEBER one of their brethren: tho' he acknowledges that a very ancient Irish Historian affirms, that it is derived from a Greek compound word which signifies the Western Island. But there is too little similarity in the sound to warrant this conjecture.

Other Historians suppose that foreigners finding this island an odd end of the world, moist and foggy, took it at first for a cold country, and therefore named it Hibernia, in order to express the winter land. But as a very short experience would disprove this supposition, so the name thus given to it would scarcely have been continued, even by those who might first impose it. Recourse must be had therefore to other conjectures for a reason of the name Hibernia. It is no improbable supposition, which is adopted by many ancient authors, that the Spaniards, whose country
when

when they invaded this island was called Hiberia, gave it a name resembling that of their own, and added the letter N for distinction sake. The great Antiquary of Ireland shall speak of this article in his own words: “Hibernia—as it is called by CAESAR, PLINY &c.—the most remote country of all Europe Westward, is derived either from the word Hiar, which among the Irish signifies the West, as CAMDEN conjectures, or from the Iberians who heretofore inhabited here: from whence possibly the island itself in ANTONINUS’s Itinerary is called Hiberione, and in S. PATRICK’s epistle twice by that name, and once Hiberia. — Nor ought we to omit the opinion of BOCHART, who conjectures from the name that Ireland was not unknown to the Phenicians, a people famous for their navigation into the remotest parts. The name, says he, plainly seems Phenician; for Hibernia, by some called Ierne, is no more than Ibernæ, or the furthest habitation; because beyond Ireland Westward the ancients knew nothing but the vast ocean. But to speak my sense in the matter, amongst all the conjectures of the word Hibernia, none seems so satisfactory as the opinion of ISIDORE and others, who deduce it from Iberia; both because of the colonies of Iberians once seated there, and also for the affinity of the name*.”

Our antiquary SAMMES is of opinion, “that it took the name of Hibernia from the Ierne of the Phenicians, because in the uttermost coast of Spain westward, is a promontory called by STRABO, Ierne; so that when Spain was the uttermost bounds of the knowledge of the Phenicians, it was called Ierne, but when these islands were discovered, then Ireland took the name as being the uttermost.” If it would not be thought impertinent to offer my conjecture on so intricate a subject, after so many learned antiquarians, I should suggest, that as Iberia signified in the ancient Celtic, which will appear to have been the original of this people, any country or place that was situated over or on the other side of a sea or river, so these might naturally be called Iberians, on account of their situation with respect to Gaul or Germany, by those who lived there and trafficked with them: and then the corruption afterwards to Hibernians, to distinguish them from the Spaniards, is easily enough ac-

* WARE’s Antiq. p. 1. 2.

counted for. For we shall find, says SAMMES, “ that the name by which all nations are known to the world, differs much from those names which they have given themselves, and by which too they distinguish one another. But the major part of the world, which is foreign to every particular kingdom, prevails in the denomination; and therefore it happens, that those kingdoms themselves so denominated, are obliged to conform to the appellations given them by the major part.”

The name of Scotia, says my Manuscript, was given to this island by the sons of MILESIUS, either after their mother SCOTA, or else, which is much more probable, because they were themselves of the posterity of the Scuits, or Scots, in Scythia; which in the Celtic signifies restless wanderers. The solution of Sir R. Cox’s is almost too ridiculous to be mentioned; “ that the Irish being a mixed people by the time they were called Scotia, they might have that name as signifying a heap; implying that as a heap consisted of many grains, so the inhabitants of Ireland were compounded of many nations”. The other opinion is supported by the best historians; and they are particularly quoted and enumerated by WARE. But it does not seem necessary to enlarge any further upon it here, than that it appears from the concurrent testimony of all ancient authors, that Ireland was called Scotia and its inhabitants Scots, before that part of Britain now called Scotland had that name: and from these genuine Scots of Ireland, the Albanian Scots who peopled North Britain had their original. The Scottish historians will not all allow this, I know: but every man who has searched into the antiquities of both nations, must be very blind, or very partial, not to see it.

It is owned very ingenuously by Mr. INNES, in his “ critical essay on the ancient inhabitants of North Britain”, which I shall have occasion often to mention in the sequel. But in contradiction to all the Irish writers and historians, he endeavours to prove “ that the ancient Scots of Ireland, were not the Milesians or the colony from Spain, who are said to have peopled that island a thousand years before the Christian Æra; but a new foreign race who soon after that æra came to Ireland as conquerors,

querors, and rendered themselves masters of it, in the same manner as the Franks came in afterwards on the Gauls. Among other reasons to support his opinion, he says, “ that the name of Scots was never heard of in Ireland, or indeed at all, ’till the third or fourth age after CHRIST; and that they are ever after mentioned as inhabitants of Ireland and of the North of Britain. LAWRENCE archbishop of Canterbury in the beginning of the seventh age, is the first that he finds who gives to Ireland the name of Scotia, in his letter to the bishop and clergy of that kingdom; and from thenceforth it is called for some ages Hibernia, or Scotia indifferently, as synonymous names for the old and new inhabitants; ’till at last it quite lost the name of Scotia, which followed the Scots into Britain, and was by degrees wholly appropriated to the kingdom of the Scots in the North of that island. He allows that the name of Scots is originally the same as that of the Scyths; and says that NENNIUS in the ninth century uses promiscuously the names of Scythæ and Scoti for the same people. But what is most remarkable, the Britons in their ancient tongue, as CAMDEN observes, call both the nations of Scyths and Scots by the same name y-Scot. This denomination, he says, gave a natural occasion to the Romans, then in possession of the South of Britain, to latinize the name of these new enemies of the empire, and call them Scoti: and thus the origin of the name is not from the Scots themselves nor from the Irish, in whose ancient language it was never in use, but a foreign denomination given them by the Britons, from their being originally Scyths, or from resembling them by their habit, arms, and customs*.” —It is not my business in this work to enter into a discussion of this criticism, which the author has supported, it must be owned, with many ingenious arguments thro a chapter of thirty pages. But he hath himself, in my opinion, furnished us with a fact that will overthrow it all. For if the Irish never came over in any numbers and invaded the Britons ’till the third century—which it seems was the first appearance of the name of Scots in history—and if the origine of this name was not from themselves, but given them by the Britons on their first coming, because of their resemblance to the Scyths in their arms and habit, or as being the same sort of restless wanderers, then there is

* INNES’s Critical Essay, p. 506—538. Oct. edit. 1729.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

no occasion for all this refinement of criticism, in opposition to the whole series of ancient Irish history, in order to shew, that the name of Scots being never heard of 'till the third century, they could not be the Milesians who had peopled Ireland so many years before, but a foreign colony who had conquered it soon after the incarnation. For notwithstanding all this argument, that fact remains still just as it did before.

As to the name of Ireland, Sir W. TEMPLE is of opinion, that it is derived from the river Ierne in this island, whence the Saxons stiled it Iren-land, and by abbreviation Ireland, to distinguish it from Scotland; as they were both anciently called Scotiae, and inhabited by the same sort of people. But it is to be observed, that this name was given to it before the Saxons had any footing in these islands; and therefore this conjecture can have no foundation. The manuscript in my possession gives the derivation of this name from IRE one of the Milesian chiefs; the truth of which, it says, is more apparent, because the book of Ardmagh records, “ that the name of this island signifies IRE’s grave, it being the grave of IRE one of the sons of MILESIUS, who was the first man of that colony who was interred upon the island”. If this tradition is to be credited, it must be allowed to be the most probable supposition with regard to this name of any that are to be met with. But why should it not acquire the name of Iron-land—and so from thence Ireland—from the great number of mines of that kind of ore with which it abounded? In short amidst such numerous and widely differing conjectures upon a point so extremely remote, it is impossible to determine with any precision which is true. We must be content to take all such things as we find them; and if we lay no greater stress upon them than they deserve, it is not very material whether we can be exact in our account or not. Let this suffice then as to the name.

Situation.
LOCATE.

This island which is surrounded by the British Ocean, and seated further to the West than any other island in Europe, is separated from England lying eastward to it about forty leagues in the widest, and twenty in the narrowest part: it hath Scotland on the North East at the distance of ten leagues; at the South East it hath France at the distance

of

of eighty six ; and the nearest part of Spain in the bay of Biscay may be reckoned about an hundred and fifty. The Sea which is inclosed between the counties of Cumberland and Lancashire on the English coast—and comprizeth in the middle of it the isle of Mann—over against which are the counties of Dublin, Louth, and Down, on the borders of Ireland, is nearly every where of an equal breadth. But Wales approaches nearer in two or three places ; and in some as near again. For Holy-head which is in Anglesea, and the most Western corner of North Wales, is but twenty leagues from Dublin,—just half the distance to Liverpool and Chester,—which with a fair wind is not more than eight or ten hours sail. In the most Northern part of the island, opposite to which is Scotland, the Sea is so very narrow, that the shire of Galloway is not above five leagues distant from the county of Down ; and further to the North it is yet less, and may be passed in open boats in three or four hours.

The extent of this island, which, next to Great Britain, is the largest perhaps in Europe, from North to South is near three hundred English, and a little more than two hundred Irish miles : and from East to West, in the broadest part, it is about an hundred and fifty of the former, and something more than an hundred of the latter. Allowing for the windings of the coast, it is in compass about seven hundred Irish miles, and eight hundred and fifty English, and may therefore be computed to be nearly half as big as Great Britain. It is said to contain above ten millions of acres of land in the Irish reckoning, which is near seventeen millions of English acres : Of these, the highways, rivers, bogs, loughs, lakes, and shrubs, are thought to take up about a million five hundred ; of very coarse land, commonly called unprofitable, another million five hundred ; and consequently of good meadow arable and pasture there remain seven millions five hundred acres. Of these in the year sixteen hundred and seventy two, the English, the Protestant Irish, and the Church, were possessed of five millions one hundred and forty thousand ; and the Irish catholicks near half as much. Since that time there has been a considerable decrease of their property which has gone over to the other side, and it continues still to decrease every day. The inhabitants were then said to be about eleven hundred thousand ; which by the ordinary course of generation—allowance being made for the effects of War, and

Extent.
PETTY.

and epidemical diseases will at the lowest computation in ninety years become almost two millions : and by comparing this number with the extent of territory, even if we should admit it to be more than two millions now, as some say they are, it will appear evidently that Ireland is still under peopled. This is one of the misfortunes, and not one of the least, which that fine country labours under : For it is people that make land and the produce of it valuable ; and without them, the most fertile grounds in Ireland would be as useless as the wide wastes of America. Until this misfortune can be remedied, it is expedient that all hands they have should be employed ; not in feeding droves of cattle, but by tillage arts and manufactures made to do as much work, as double the number would do under less care and management : And were the common people once made warm and thriving by their industry, they might better spare their gentry than they can do now ; they would be enabled in time to save immense sums to Great Britain, which she now pays to her rivals for sail-cloth and linnen, and be a perpetual addition to her riches by a moderate encrease of the riches of Ireland. It is our interest therefore to prevent as much as possible a drain of people from that country.

Division.
 M^r.
 BOATE.
 WARE.
 BOLTON.
 CAMDEN.
 Anonym.

There have been many divisions formerly made of this island, according to the old historians, by the several petty Kings and Chiefs who have had possession of it. But as all these accounts are uncertain, and some of them probably may be fabulous, I shall trouble the reader with none but those which now subsist. Ireland then is divided into four provinces ; Ulster, Leinster, Connaught, and Munster : and these are subdivided into thirty two counties, two hundred and sixty baronies, and two thousand two hundred and ninety three parishes ; which are all geometrically set out without abolishing the ancient denominations and divisions abovementioned. But they are become so very unequal, that some are twenty times as big as others. The county of Cork, for instance, in respect of people and parishes seems to be an eighth, if not a tenth, of the whole kingdom ; and other counties not above the twentieth part of the county of Cork.

The province of Ulster takes in the Northern part of the island, extending itself to the Sea both on the East and West ; the form of which is nearly

ly round, and the circumference about four hundred and twenty miles. It takes in the counties of Donnegal or Tyrconnel, Antrim, Fermanagh, Derry, and Down, all of them bordering on the ocean ; and Cavan, Monaghan, Ardmagh, and Tyrone, within the land. In this province, the chief city of which is Londonderry, there are six Bishops sees, besides the primacy, — Raphoe, Derry, Down, Clogher, Dromore, and Kilmore, — ten market towns, twenty nine boroughs which send members to parliament, and three hundred and sixty five parishes. This province is particularly well watered, and was anciently well wooded, which cannot be said now of any part of Ireland ; but the fertile meadows, the hanging hills, and the spacious plains fit for tillage or pasture, make it delightful to the traveller as well as fruitful to its inhabitants. However what renders this province superior to the rest of the island, is the great linnen manufacture which is carried on in it ; which spreads over it a face of industry and commerce unknown at present in the other parts of Ireland.

The province of Leinster has the Sea only on the Eastern side of it, and comprehends the counties of Dublin, Wicklow, Louth, Meath, and Wexford, on the coast ; Catherlough or Carlow which hath a little corner extending to the Sea, and Westmeath, Kildare, Kilkenny, King's county, Queen's county, and Longford, entirely within the land. The form of this province is almost triangular, and the sides are not much unequal. The Eastern coast along the Sea shore is near eighty miles, and the circumference about two hundred and seventy. The chief city of this province is Dublin, the capital of the kingdom ; besides which it contains fifteen market towns and fifty three boroughs. It is made up of twelve counties, in which are the sees of the Archbishop of Dublin and four Bishops, — Meath, Kildare, Fernes and Offory, — and eight hundred and fifty eight parishes. This whole province is fertile in cattle, and fish ; and might be so in corn, if the inhabitants would give that attention to agriculture which they ought to do, and not content themselves with the low and despicable occupation of being little better than drovers and butchers for wiser nations. The inhabitants approach the nearest to the English manners and dispositions of any part of Ireland, because they are for the most part descended of them, and the province

vince is fuller and better inhabited than the others ; having above ten thousand houses more in it than Ulster the best inhabited of the rest.

The province of Conaught has the Sea only on the Western side ; and contains the counties of Mayo, Galway, Sligo, bordering on the Ocean, and Roscommon and Leitrim inland counties. The form of it is long, and towards the North and South ends thin and narrow ; but towards the middle gets bigger and bigger, and its circumference is about four hundred miles. The principal town of this province is Galway ; and indeed it has but six others in it, being the most uncultivated and desolate of them all. It has the see of an Archbishop and three other Bishops, — Tuam, Clonfert, Elphin, and Killala, — and ten boroughs which send members to parliament ; and contains in it but three hundred and thirty parishes. But even this country is replenished with corn and cattle, and has many advantages which might be much encreased by its bays and navigable rivers with which it abounds.

The province of Munster which takes in the Southern part of the island, extending itself like Ulster to the East and West, comprehends the counties of Limerick and Tipperary within the land ; and Clare, Kerry, Waterford, and Cork, all washed by the Sea, but stretching themselves a great way into the Country. The form of this province is nearly four square, and the whole circuit by following the promontories and inlets is about four hundred and fifty miles. The principal city of this province is Cork, which hath of late years exceeded Limerick and Waterford, anciently both beyond it. It hath only four other market towns besides these, twenty six boroughs which return members to parliament, and seven hundred and forty parishes. It contains the see of an Archbishop and five other Bishops :—Cashel, Waterford, Cork, Cloyne, Limerick, and Killaloe—and though it abounds with wild and solitary mountains, yet the vallies between are beautified with excellent pasture lands ; which would be as pleasing to the eye, and much more profitable to the inhabitants, if many of them were turned to tillage ; that the common people—which would yet be the least advantage—might be fed with bread, as well as with potatoes and milk.—The reader will see from this account, that the four provinces taken together make up a Kingdom ap-
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pendant

pendent to Great Britain, which for the size of it abounds as much with every thing that is necessary for profit or for pleasure as any country under Heaven. It must be owned indeed that Providence, and what with great absurdity we call Nature, hath been very bountiful to this island ; and if it is not cultivated and improved so much as it may, and ought to be, we know where the fault must lie. To these four provinces many antient historians add a fifth, called Meath ; which was a part cut off from each province, exempt from all taxes, law, and contributions, and independent of all but the Monarchs of Ireland, in which a royal Palace was built, and which was to serve as the revenue or demesne lands of the crown. The old writers and records mention this division to have been made as early as by some of the Belgians ; of whom notice will be taken in the history, as one of the first colonies that got footing in this island. But Meath being a part of Leinster, and the reason for that separation having long since ceased and gone out of remembrance, it is now always included in that Eastern province.

There is yet however another division of this island necessary to be mentioned, in order to enable the reader to understand its history ; which is that of the English Pale, and the lands of the ancient Irish. The former comprehends only four counties ; Louth in the province of Ulster ; and Dublin, Meath, and Kildare in that of Leinster. The occasion of this will be best explained, when we come to treat of the war in Ireland after the conquest. At present however it is necessary the reader should be informed, that though the English had made themselves masters of the whole island, or, to speak with more precision, tho the Irish had submitted themselves to the English government, yet our countrymen soon quarrelling among themselves about the loaves and fishes, and some of them degenerating into the barbarous fashion of the ancient Irish and joining with them, the English at last became so weakened and overpowered, that nothing remained to them of the whole island worth regarding but the great cities and counties abovementioned : to which the name of the Pale was given, because the government and authority of the English kings and plantations, which at first had been submitted to over the whole country, were then reduced to so small a compass, and as it were impaled within it. All the rest of the island remained un-

der many petty dominions, possessed by the Irish Lords and great men, who paid little or no obedience to the government of England; but, on the contrary, some or other of them were almost continually giving disturbance to the administration, which shut them out from any share of the transactions in it; and the reduction of them was never brought to any perfection, till the reign of queen ELIZABETH, nor finally 'till JAMES I.

In this English pale stood Dublin, the metropolis of the island, and the royal city; where the council of state, the parliament, and the courts of judicature are held. The situation of this city, which is neatly built, and very populous, is particularly pleasant and wholesome; having hills on the south, plains on the west, the sea near it on the east, and the river Liffy, which was anciently, no doubt, its bounds on the north, running now almost through the middle of it, and affording keys for the loading and unloading merchandise all along its banks, which are walled in, to a great extent; and which afford streets for air and pleasure, as well as for the great convenience of their traffick. The King's castle, in which resides the Governour, or Lord Lieutenant, is built upon a rising ground on the south side of the city; and anciently was fortified with ditches and towers, of which there are little or no remains. It is a very noble edifice, elegantly finished, and extremely well adapted to the purposes of a royal palace. Adjoining to the castle-yard are the treasury and the arsenal for military stores; and on one side of it, are the Secretary of States, the Council, and the war offices. In this city, besides eighteen parish churches and two chapels, are two cathedrals of great antiquity; one dedicated to S. PATRICK, and built at several times, wherein are a Dean who is elective by the Chapter, two Archdeacons, and two and twenty Prebendaries. There is also another, and more ancient cathedral, commonly called Christ Church; the great dignities of which, except one, are in the gift of the Crown, and the Prebends in the Dean and Chapter. To this church, the Lord Lieutenant, or Lords Justices in his absence, and the House of Lords, go in state upon great holidays: on Sundays they go to the chapel in the castle, where the Chaplains of the Lord Lieutenant perform the duty in rotation; the first Chaplain always officiating as Dean in the communion service. But as though it was out of mere perverseness, and in contradiction to the humour, which in ancient time prevailed universally
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over the island, of having musick upon all occasions, there is but one choir in the whole kingdom, which serves for Christ Church and S. Patrick's; and all the other cathedrals are mere parish churches. We read in ancient time of many academies or universities in this country; but in these latter ages, the only place of education in the sciences is the university in this city, and first founded in the year thirteen hundred and twenty. It made but little figure however till Queen ELIZABETH built the college where it now stands, and endowed it with privileges and revenues; which were afterwards enlarged by JAMES I. But as learning encreased with the establishment of the English government, the buildings soon became too small: and the Irish House of Commons addressing King WILLIAM upon the subject, he gave three thousand pounds to enlarge it. This was however not sufficient to bring it to such a state as the cause of learning merited; and by many grants and donations since, to the amount perhaps of thirty or forty thousand. — I speak upon conjecture — it is now become a superb and elegant structure, that far exceeds any thing of the kind in England: and indeed I never saw a public building, except Greenwich hospital, the magnificence of which can be compared with it. The original constitution of this college hath been changed; and a new set of statutes were drawn up by Archbishop LAUD, in the reign of CHARLES I. It consists at present of a Provost nominated by the Crown, seven senior Fellows, thirteen juniors, and seventy Scholars of the House, who have some maintenance on the foundation: and the number of Students at an average is about five hundred. Professorships have been erected lately for divinity, and common, and civil law, as well as Greek, and physick; to which may be added, Lecturers in divinity, in history, oratory, natural philosophy, botany, chemistry, and anatomy. It is therefore no wonder, that from an university thus endowed and accommodated, and in which excellent rules for study and education are very strictly and impartially observed, so many men of learning and abilities should have proceeded, and done it honour.

The city of Waterford is a port of great trade in the province of Munster, being situated on the river Sure; and—for its fidelity to the English in former times—was endowed with many ample privileges. It is said to have been first built by some Norwegian pirates; who though they pitched upon one of the

the most barren parts, and in the most foggy air of all that country, yet being a very safe and commodious situation for ships and commerce, it soon grew into a port of great wealth and power. Because though it stands seven or eight miles from the sea, yet the harbour is so deep that ships of great burden may sail up to and ride at anchor before the key; which is said to be the handsomest in the King's dominions: and for the convenience of conveying commodities in smaller vessels to several towns in the adjacent counties by two navigable rivers near it, there is no place in Ireland, except Cork and Limerick, which can be compared with it. This is the nearest and most convenient port of any to correspond with Bristol, and all the towns of traffick on the Severn, by a due Westerly wind without any variation.

The city of Limerick in the same province, being something larger than Waterford, and the third city in the kingdom, is situated on an island surrounded by the river Shannon, and in ancient times was a very strong fortification. It is distant from the ocean about sixteen leagues, but ships of burden can come up close to the very walls. Though because of a cataract in the river a little above the town---which will be mentioned in another place---a land carriage for eight or nine miles is necessary, yet beyond that, loaded vessels of a tolerable burden may pass upon the river to many parts of the country at the distance of eighty miles. In the time of Lord STRAFFORD's administration, it was proposed to remedy this inconvenience of the cataract, by turning the course of the Shannon through a large bog on the Eastward adjoining to it. But the unhappy troubles which soon ensued in that kingdom, overthrew this, and many other noble designs of a publick nature that had been formed for the honour and emolument of the people of Ireland. A work of this kind however has since that been under consideration; so as to make the Shannon navigable from the key of Limerick to Carickdrumrusk in the county of Leitrim; and full powers were given by an act of GEORGE I. to four persons therein named, and their assigns, to proceed upon this project. But whether through inability or want of courage, or from what other cause I do not know, but nothing was ever attempted to execute the act. The commissioners of the inland navigation have now entered upon a project not only to make the Shannon navigable,
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but by canals and sluices to give it a communication with some other rivers of the kingdom; and the House of Commons granted a considerable sum for that purpose. In consequence of this, a mile of canal hath been cut through a morass of forty feet and an hill of thirty feet in depth; which by a large single lock of wrought marble hath compleated a navigation of three miles near Limerick. Five locks more since that have been erected on the Shannon, and thereby opened an uninterrupted navigation of sixty miles in length: and as considerable sums are given in every session of Parliament towards works of this kind, we may expect that in time the Shannon will be made navigable through its whole extent. The city of Limerick is rich and populous, and could it once avail itself of this noble river, on which it stands, by a navigation, both the city and the country round it would soon feel the effects in the encrease of its trade and riches. It will be ever famous to posterity, on account of the sieges it endured towards the close of the last century; when it was obliged to surrender to King WILLIAM, and complete the peace of Ireland.

The city of Cork in the same province of Munster, founded by the Danes, is almost surrounded by the river Lee; which about ten miles below it discharges itself into the ocean, and renders it so considerable a port for commerce as to become the second city of the kingdom. Indeed if the Parliament and the courts of justice were not held at Dublin, it would soon give place to Cork for wealth and traffick; which, as it is, may become its rival. It is so much improved and enlarged with elegant buildings, and with draining the marshes, within twenty or thirty years past, as to be a very different place from what it has been described by very modern writers. It is without dispute the capital of the largest, richest, best inhabited county, if we except Dublin, of any in Ireland, and the principal thorowfare of all commodities from England to the trading towns in the province of Conaught. The most distinguished of these is Galway, whose buildings are uniform and of great extent. One would think however that it was formerly much more considerable than it is at present, from the story of a foreign merchant enquiring of an Irishman in what part of Galway Ireland lay; imagining Galway to be the island, and the latter only a noted town in it. It is not to be supposed but that in such a country as this, so fertile and so finely situated, there are
many

many other places of great strength and commerce : but these are all that are considerable enough to be mentioned here, as what will often occur in the ensuing history.

I must now turn to give an account of the ecclesiastical division of this island, which, like the civil, was made into four provinces; and was confirmed in eleven hundred fifty two by Pope EUGENIUS III. who sent the four palls of Archbishops by his Legate JOHN PAPIRUS. We are told by FLATTESBURY, “ that the Legate holding a full and honourable council at Meath, where were present the Bishops, Abbots, Kings, Dukes, and Elders of Ireland, there, by the apostolical authority, with the advice of the Cardinals, and the consent of the Bishops, Abbots, and others met together, the four Archbishopricks were constituted in Ireland.” The primacy in reverence of Patricius --- since always called St. PATRICK --- was given to the Archbishop of Ardmaugh, who has the title of Primate of all Ireland. The Archbishop of Dublin, who has the title of Primate of Ireland, is consequently the next in rank; and the other Palls were placed at Cashell and Tuam. These Palls, about which so much noise was made at the court of Rome, and in the English church, in the eighth century, I have shewn in another work [*b*,] were nothing more than a sort of ornament of white silk and lamb’s wool, of a particular fashion appropriated to Metropolitans: but when the Popes had learnt to make use of it as an artifice to encrease their wealth and power, it was intended to denote the superior jurisdiction of Archbishops. Thus USHER, himself the Primate of Ireland, tells us, “ that there had been sundry Archbishops in that land, between S. PATRICK and MALACHIAS, but not one of them could be named that ever sought to Rome for a Pall: and that BERNARD, who was canonised for a saint, informs us, that from the very beginning to his time the metropolitical see of Ardmaugh wanted the use of the Pall; and yet, according to him, they exercised much greater authority before than ever they did afterwards; for they not only consecrated Bishops, but erected also new Bishopricks and Archbishopricks too sometimes, according as they thought fitting [*c*.]”

[*b*] Warner’s Eccles. Hist. of Eng. vol. I. p. 161.

[*c*] Usher’s Religion of the anc. Irish, p. 58, 59.

In the synod abovementioned, a certain number of suffragan Bishops were allotted to each of the archbishops. Under Ardmagh were subjected the bishopricks of Down and Connor, since united; Louth, sunk now into the dioceses of Ardmagh and Clogher; Clonard, Kells, and Dulec, united under the title of Meath; and Rathlure, annexed since to Derry; but in this distribution there were not the sees of Dromore and Kilmore, which have since been added. So that in this province, where originally were ten bishopricks, there are now only six besides the primacy. To the Archbishoprick of Dublin, were allotted the sees of Glendaloch, since annexed to it; Leighlin and Fernes, since united; Kildare and Ossory: but anciently Fernes itself was an archbishoprick in the time which USHER mentions above, as I have seen under his own hand in a MS. in the college library. In the province of Cashel, were distributed the bishopricks of Killaloe, Kilfenora now united to it, and Iniscathy and Roscrea, since sunk into it; Limerick, to which Ardfert and Aghadoe are now annexed; Emly, added to the archbishoprick; Waterford and Lismore, since united; Cloyne, and Cork and Ross, since united. So that instead of twelve, which was the ancient distribution, there are now only six dioceses in that province. Under the Archbishop of Tuam, were the sees of Mayo, and Ardagh---formerly united to Kilmore---annexed now both to the archbishoprick; Killala and Achonry, since united; Roscommon, since transferred to Elphin; Clonmack, annexed since, under the title of Kilmore, to the province of Ardmagh; Clonfert and Kilmacduagh, since united. In the four provinces are now only eighteen bishopricks, under the four Archbishops, which at the synod were thirty four: and in the early ages of the infant church of Ireland, there were many more, annexed at that time to these which have been mentioned, and which were for the most part seated in small villages. Nay it is said in a manuscript history of NENNIUS's quoted by Usher, that at the beginning S. PATRICK founded here three hundred and sixty five churches, and ordained as many Bishops, besides three thousand Presbyters. In process of time the number of Bishops was daily multiplied, according to the pleasure of the Metropolitan; and not only so far as that every church almost had a Bishop, which BERNARD complains of, but also that in some towns or cities there were ordained more than one *. But as by the consolidations abovementioned,

* Usher's Religion of the ant. Irish, p. 59.

and the improvements made in the country, the revenues of all of them are now become very considerable, for which little duty is to be done --- there not being three and twenty hundred parishes amongst two and twenty diocessans --- there will probably be no more alterations of this kind to the end of the world.

Climate.
MIL.
BOATE.

Though the climate of Ireland is somewhat northerly, being above fifty five degrees of latitude, yet the air is very temperate, and perhaps much less subject to violent frosts and severe cold than any other land lying in the same height of latitude. The cold weather begins early towards the latter end of September, continuing generally for five or six months; during which time it is necessary to have fires, as is the case in England. There are commonly three or four slight frosts in a winter, but they seldom last longer than a few days. As the cold is moderate in the winter, so the heat in summer is very tolerable, and very seldom so intense as to be troublesome. In the spring of the year, it is ordinarily fair weather for five or six weeks at a time, with clear sun-shine all day long; but this being once over, it rains almost all the summer, there being scarce a whole week, or even three days together, without it. In the latter end of autumn, the weather is usually fair again for some weeks, though not so long as in the spring, and then the rains set in during all the winter, though not for many days together; and—I can speak from experience --- not with that violence, or for whole days together, as we often have in England. In general it is observed, that the rains fall more in the day than in the night time, and when it rains for three or four days successively, the intervening nights are clear and fair. As a proof of my own observation whilst I was there, that it seldom or never rains with that violence, nor so long together, as it often does in England, we hear of no great floods carrying away bridges, filling peoples houses, covering the roads and meadows, interrupting their commerce, and drowning men and horses.

The cause of so much wet weather in Ireland has been accounted for in this manner; that the western winds meeting with no lands on this side of America to break their force, they waft hither the vapours of an immense ocean: and these condensing in their progress, not only obscure the sky, but from the nature of rest and suspension descend in such constant rains.

Were this island as free from too many wet days, as it is from too many cold ones --- for I question if there is more rain in the whole than in England --- it would be one of the pleafantest countries in the world; as it is certainly one of the moft temperate. There is great probability however that this inconvenience will be in a great meafure leffened every day, as it hath been already in fome degree, by taking care to drain more of the wet and boggy lands which abound too much in it ftill; and which increafe, if they do not occafion, this prodigious frequency of wet weather.

But Ireland is not only fubject to much rain, but, like England, alfo to dark and cloudy air, in winter time efpecially, for feveral days together even when it is quite dry. This is not to be underftood of mifts and fogs, from which it is as much exempt as other countries, particularly in the plains. There are two forts of them however; one quite filling the air, and if it afcends foreboding rain, if it defcends promifing fair weather; and the other like flakes of foggy vapours, fcattered up and down with clear fpaces between, flying to and fro with the wind, and oftentimes ending in a general mift. As the frofts are but flight and fhort, fo there is feldom any fnow, and many years none at all, in the plains and valleys efpecially; neither is it often that the Irish are troubled with hail, never of any great fize as we have, nor for a long continuance. This island is perhaps as little fubject to lightning, and confequently to thunder, as any country in the world; there being many years in which there is none at all: and in thofe fummers in which they happen it is feldom more than once or twice, and then the lightning is fo faint, and the noife of the thunder fo weak, that no body is terrified, nor any damage done to man or beaft. It is with windy weather in Ireland generally as it is with rain, there being more windy days perhaps than in moft other countries: and yet it is much to be questioned, whether their ftorms are fo violent, and laft fo many days together, as we find thofe in England.

But notwithstanding the wet and the windy weather to which Ireland is obnoxious, yet it is a healthy country to live in; there being as few fick, and as many aged people to be met with, as in any of its neighbouring climates. Indeed there are feveral difeafes common to other countries, which

are extremely rare, if not altogether unknown in Ireland. The scurvy for instance, an evil so generally complained of in all other northern nations bordering on the sea, never infected the Irish, or at most in a small degree, 'till within this last century. Even the English, who have carried thither what there is of it, wear it almost out in the next generation: and yet here it prevails to such a degree, as there is scarcely a constitution which is not tainted with it. The dysentery, the flux, and blindness among the lowest people—owing probably to the smokiness of their cabins which are without chimnies—are the diseases to which Ireland may be said to be most peculiarly subject: but with care and good management, the two former are seldom dangerous or very troublesome. Whatever are their diseases, it is certain that the common people trouble themselves but little about physick: and whilst our papers are crouded with quack advertisements which cheat the people out of their money and their health, to the disgrace of the nation, not a single empyrick is to be heard of in the Irish papers, nor any medicines advertised, but a very few from England: a piece of wisdom which we are yet to learn, and which we ought by some means or other to make national.

According to the report of all history and tradition, nothing venomous is brought forth or can be nourished and live in Ireland: but whether this is owing to the air or the soil, I do not find that naturalists are agreed. The old historians indeed entertain their readers with many strange accounts of experiments that have been made of the sovereign virtue of this island in destroying venomous creatures; and they carry it so far as to say, not only that the smell of the land will kill them, but that water, in which the scrapings of books from Ireland had been steeped, had cured the stings of adders. Our venerable BEDE himself relates this very gravely: but many of the ancient Irish attribute this virtue, not to the climate nor the soil, but to the prayers of S. PATRICK who converted the island. Nay KEATING goes further than this, and tells us, that it is in consequence of a prophecy which MOSES made to a Scythian Prince, that wherever his posterity should inhabit, the country should not be infested with poisonous creatures. But be all this as fabulous as it may, it is impossible to read the account above which is indubitably true, of the pleasant, healthy, and temperate climate of Ireland, without being astonished at its remaining so many ages as it did, in the depth of barbarism and ignorance, uncultivated and unimproved.

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The country is naturally very fruitful, and seems by the soil to have always been so; though by the great sloth of the mere Irish, and some other causes co-operating with it, it has not had the cultivation which it deserves. Indeed that expression is too favourable; for, to say the truth, it has scarcely had any cultivation at all. The lands of this island, like most other countries, are of various kinds and fashion; such as hilly, champian, mountainous, and level. The mountainous parts in general are not very high nor steep, but large in circumference, and easy of ascent; the soil of which is for the most part very fertile both for arable and pasture. Others however there are of considerable height and dimensions; the ground of which is lean and stony, which serve only for pasture of sheep, and in several places wet and moorish. The fruitful soil of this country is in some places a blackish earth, in others sand and clay mixed, or earth and sand, and earth and gravel: but the chalky ground and the red earth, which are both so plentiful in many parts of England, are not to be found here. The places whose ground is bare are neither large nor frequently to be met with; but those which are over-run with superfluous moisture are common throughout the island; not only on the mountains—which generally consist of nothing else—but also in the hilly quarters and plains, extending some miles in length and breadth in many places.

Soil.

 BOATE.
SMITH.
Anonym.

Though Ireland is famous, or rather infamous, among strangers for the many bogs with which it abounds, which are neither pleasurable nor wholesome; and though they produce nothing for the food of man or beast, yet they are not to be reckoned in the number of unprofitable or useless circumstances; but upon the whole perhaps, as things stand at present, they are necessary in some degree. For in the parts distant from the sea, where wood as well as coals are wanting, these bogs afford a turf which yields sweet and agreeable fuel; and when chark'd, it is said to be the sweetest and best of all. There are three or four different sorts of bogs; some dry and grassy, others watry, muddy, and haddocky, and they are not of an equal depth. The former sort, like the fens in Lincolnshire, look fair and pleasant, and are so dry in the summer that they may be passed without danger, and are full of sweet and good grass, on which cattle of all kinds are depastured. But the deepest bogs of this sort are impassable in summer as well as winter; though they

Bogs.

 BOATE.
BROWNE.
Anonym.

they have a few firm and narrow paths in particular places, through which by those who know them, they may be crossed from the one side to the other: and this hath given the name of Irish bog-trotters to those who are trained up in it from their infancy. In running along these paths, the bogs will tremble a great way round, which are therefore called quaking bogs, and if of a small compass, only quagmires. There have been instances of some of these bogs that were of large extent which have moved their places, overrunning the ground beneath them, and moving upon its surface. But these have been occasioned by a more than ordinary concourse of waters, and the land adjoining, to which they removed, being considerably lower than the bogs. The watry bogs are likewise clothed with grass, but the water does not sink into them as in the former, but they both yield for the most part very good turf for firing; and therefore are necessary, as I said, in many parts of Ireland. It must be owned too likewise they have their inconveniences; because they keep people at a distance from one another, and consequently hinder and perplex them in their affairs. Moreover they are a great destruction to cattle, the chief commodity of this country: for in the spring of the year, when they are weak and hungry and the grass is scarce, they venture on the edges of the bogs where it grows, and so very often fall into pits and sloughs, and are either dangerously hurt in getting out, or perish irrecoverably. The natives, or mere Irish, had an advantage formerly from the multitude of these bogs, besides that of fuel; which was that it made their country difficult, if not to strangers almost impossible of access. This not only prevented their conquest for some ages, but the fewer strangers came to them the easier they lived themselves. There were then no inns, nor houses of entertainment for travellers, but every house that a man found he made his inn; and he said no more when he came to it but a How d'ye, and putting off his brogues, fate down to the fire with the same familiarity as one of the family.

There is a very obvious improvement, and a very easy one, to be made of many of these bogs in the same manner as it is practised with great success in Norway; where, we are told by Bishop PONTOPPIDON, they raise hillocks in them for the growing Naper turneps. The same experiment has been made on such lands in England, and with the same advantage. There is no occasion

occasion of draining the bog for this service; and the expence of throwing up the hillocks, which are but two foot high, is very trifling. The common English turnep will succeed in this way, though not so well as the Norway fort. But the Naper seed may be had from thence in any quantity almost as cheap as the English: and I flatter myself, that I have already been the means of introducing this improvement of those wild uncultivated wastes, by explaining it to a gentleman when I was in Ireland, and—as I could get none of the Naper — by sending him some of the properest English seed since; which he promised to try upon his boggy land. It is not to be doubted but that the places on which all the bogs have grown, were formerly firm grounds; since it is found that, at the bottom of all such bogs as have yet been dug or drained, there have been pieces of timber and roots of trees, upon which the marks of the hatchet and even of fire remain unto this day; neither is their original so far back in time as is generally thought, a tobacco pipe having been found in one of them above ten foot deep.

It is to no purpose here to trace these bogs to their original, as some of their writers have done with great clearness and ingenuity; but it is to a very good purpose to observe, that as the same causes generally produce the same effects, so the obstructions in their rivers which are daily increasing, and the neglect of making drains in their moist grounds, must every year add to the waters already contained in the pores of the earth, and so encrease their bogs. It is very useful to observe further, that as these nuisances have been principally occasioned by the obstructions in the rivers, so clearing the channels, and removing the sand-banks, mill-races, and weirs, must in a short time not only remedy the present evil, but prevent also the growth or the increase of others in time to come. The complaint of the evil of these bogs and morasses is very just and very general; and is therefore an object that is worthy of the wisdom and attention of the legislature. It is certainly worth their while to consider, whether it would not be an evident advantage to the kingdom, if the Papists, who are now interdicted by law from any durable property, were admitted to one in these wilds; — where at present no man can be said to have any property, or where the owner himself will not attempt it, — on the condition of their reclaiming them in such a number of years? Whether the
reduction

Loughs.

BOATE.
BROWNE.
Anonym.
SMITH.

reduction of unprofitable mountains and vast morasses would not meliorate the air, and help to people and beautify the country; and whether a durable property in such lands, which now return no advantage and are a national nuisance, but which by culture would adorn and enrich this country, could be so hurtful even in Popish hands as in their present state, are questions which are necessary for the cool consideration of an Irish parliament: and there never was a period perhaps, in which their deliberations on the public welfare could be more ably and successfully assisted than they may be at present.

Besides the bogs, there are many lakes or loughs in Ireland which deserve some description; every one of which sends forth one or more brooks, being all of them very deep, and well stored with fish. Those which are situated in a dale or valley, and surrounded wholly or in part with some little hills—which is the case of most of them—are very delightful to the eye, and afford an agreeable situation on their borders for country houses. Many of them have one or more little islands in the middle very commodious for fishing or shooting; some of which, it is said, but whether truly or not I do not know, float about as the violence of the wind directs them. The water of many of the greater loughs, through the mixture of the sea which flows in at every tide, is salt or very brackish: and such properly speaking might be called arms or inlets of the sea, to which the inhabitants have given the name of lakes or loughs; for they are several miles in compass even the least of them, and the largest look like a sea itself. Very few of the islands in these loughs are either planted or inhabited; but as most of them are covered with good grass they serve for pasture to sheep and other cattle. Some few houses there were in them formerly, to which those who loved quiet, privacy, and study, and others who were fond of rural sports or planting and gardening, used to retire. In short, there are more lakes or loughs of every kind in this island than any other country, it may be, of the same extent in the world; and they abound more in the provinces of Conaught and Ulster than in any other part of the kingdom. It must be owned that it does not fall within the design of this work to give a description of any of these; and yet it would be almost unpardonable not to mention Lough

Lene,

Lene, or the lake of Killarney, in the county of Kerry, on account of the many singular beauties it contains. On one side of this lake, which is about six English miles in length, and near half as much broad at a medium, is a range of mountains whose summit is generally lost in the clouds, and whose sides down to the verge of the water are beautifully clothed with groves of various kinds of trees. An infinite number of islands of several kinds adorn this lake; most of which, as well as the mountains on the side of it, are covered with the *Arbutus*, commonly called the strawberry-tree, whose verdure is blended with scarlet fruit at one time, and blossoms like little pearls at another. The trunks of these trees are frequently four feet and a half in circumference, and nine or ten yards in height. But it is said that they cut them down as the chief fuel to melt and refine the silver and lead ore discovered in a peninsula in this lake, and a great destruction was made of it by an accidental fire. On the other side of the lake, opposite to the stupendous mountains above mentioned, is a level and beautiful country, with the town of Killarney, and the habitation and improvements of several gentlemen at different distances. But I can enter no farther into the particular beauties of this place, which we are told is not to be described, nor to be seen, without rapture.

Of the larger kind of loughs over which the eye cannot at once command a prospect, and which have no access of the tide or mixture of the sea, there is one which seems to claim an honourable notice here; not only as being the largest in Ireland, and being exceeded by few in Europe, but also on account of its surprising qualities. This is Lough Neah; of an oval form indented on every side, and estimated to measure twenty English miles in length, above ten miles in breadth at a medium, and to overspread about an hundred thousand acres of land. The benefits of this lake are communicated to five several counties; and tho' it is fed by six considerable rivers, four of lesser note, and several brooks, yet it has but one narrow outlet to discharge this great conflux of water. As this does not afford a sufficient vent, it occasions the lake in the winter time to rise eight or ten feet above its summer level; which overflows the low lands on its coast, and thereby annually washes away and en-

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croaches

croaches upon the higher ground. A method of opening this narrow passage, which is continually rendered narrower by the mud and sand thrown up in it, and the eel weirs erected near it, seems to deserve the attention of the commissioners of the inland navigation. On the shores of this lake have been found a great variety of beautiful pebbles, crystals, cornelians, mochoas, agats, and other precious stones. The water abounds with fish of various kinds in innumerable quantities, and of prodigious sizes. The lake is remarkable for two properties, the one for healing ulcers, evil, and running sores, all which in eight days time have been perfectly cured; and the other for petrifying wood. There is no doubt but this immense lake has been occasioned by so many rivers running into it, and its having but one narrow passage out of it. The same cause continuing, the effect must still increase, till it makes its way over all the lands that are not considerably above its surface: and therefore this is an evil which requires a speedy remedy. Indeed its increase may be not only prevented by destroying the weirs, and opening and enlarging the narrow passage, but a great part of the lands which now lie under water may be reclaimed, and rendered useful to the proprietors, and to the nation.

Rivers.

BOATE.
BROWNE.
Anonym.

The whole island is full of fountains and springs, not only in the flat and champian countries, but on the mountains and hills; the water of which is for the most part cool, clear and pure; and some of them are medicinal. These differ from each other, as well as from most other chalybeats, chiefly in the different degrees of strength of the mineral impregnation; and are equally effectual in the cure of diseases as those of their neighbours. But the physicians indulging the humour of their patients in a fashionable taste for every thing that is foreign—the great bane of Ireland—refer them to the remotest parts of Europe for spaws; when they might be supplied generally to as good, and sometimes to a better purpose, with the native productions of their own soil at an infinitely cheaper rate. No country in the world abounds more with brooks than Ireland; which besides watering the land, and affording drink for the cattle, enable the inhabitants to grind their corn at an easy rate, and to serve the purposes of several manufactures. The rivers, tho' generally
rocky

rocky and shallow, yet are more in number, and clearer, than those in England. The Shannon is larger than the Thames, wide and deep every where; and might at no great expence be made navigable for ships of burthen almost two hundred miles.

It must be owned that a great attention has been given in the present age, and very deservedly, to the inland navigation; and vast sums and great encouragements have been allowed, and still continue to be allowed, for this purpose by parliament. A navigation for boats, it has been already said, is now carrying on at a great expence from Athlone to Limerick on the Shannon: and indeed what an indolent and infatuated people must they be, if, when providence has furnished them with one of the finest rivers in the world, they should suffer it to remain of no account, and sit down contented under a load of fifty per cent for carriage more than they need to bear, and see the fertile banks of their rivers rendered useless, unprofitable, and swallowed up before their faces! By making only the river Shannon navigable, it is probable that one third of the carriage of Ireland would in a few years be turned that way, several lands would be recovered from loughs, and others freed from those floods which at present make them of no value. Many canals are also cutting in several parts of the island, which by joining one navigable river to another, will soon encrease their commerce, and spread a face of improvement and cultivation over the country to the public good, which at present it must be owned it stands in need of.

The Shannon rises out of a ridge of mountains in the county of Leitrim, and is a boundary between the province of Conaught and the other three. In its course, which is above an hundred and fifty miles, it receives many great and small rivers which swell and enlarge it; and its banks are adorned with several towns of consequence, and pleasant seats. It is remarkable also for several overspreadings of its waters, which are called the loughs abovementioned; all which abound with fish of various kinds, and many pleasant and profitable islands. But with all the advantages and beauties of this river, it hath one great defect—a ridge of rocks spreading quite across it—which causes a cataraet or waterfall that

obstructs all navigation farther up the river, which is so wide and deep, that otherwise, with a little assistance, would be navigable almost to its source; not only for boats, but for barges and barks of a considerable burthen. There are several other rivers in the province of Conaught, the principal of which is the Sack; but none of them to compare to the Shannon for length, breadth, and depth. The chief rivers of Munster are the Sure and Broadwater, next to which are Cork and Kinfales; and all the rest in this province are of little moment. In Leinster, besides some that are inconsiderable, are the Oure, the Barrow, the Slane, the Liffy, and the Boyne. The two first are navigable many miles up into the country; the Liffy is the capital river in the island, not for its magnitude or extent, for several others surpass it, but because Dublin the metropolis is seated upon its borders; a mile below which it loses itself in a bay of the sea called the harbour of Dublin, which will be described presently. Between the city of Dublin and the Liffy are completed nine miles of uninterrupted navigation; whereon are erected four Bridges, and many single, double, and treble aqueducts for the discharging underwater, all of the most durable beautiful structure; amounting to eighteen miles of finished navigation. In short it may be said, that a navigation has been already completed of above a hundred and twenty miles thro' the body of that kingdom, within these few years, with the due appendages of bridges, locks, aqueducts, &c. The principal river in Ulster is the Bann; but which, because of a rock which directly crosses the channel from one shore to the other, is navigable only a few miles from the sea. Into this falls the Blackwater, broader and deeper than the Bann: and besides these there are scarcely any other rivers in the province of Ulster, except such as are made so by the flowing in of the tide, and at its ebb remain little brooks: and of this kind of rivers there are several to be found in every province. But it may be presumed, that many of the rivers which are not now navigable might without much difficulty be made so, by draining the vast tracts of bogs that lie bordering upon them everywhere: and whilst there is no way of carrying to the sea ports the produce of the inland countries in such seasons as they are in demand, their superfluities must always occasion a glut of the commodities so abounding, and leave no temptation to the husbandman to follow that industry the

next

next season: on the other hand the sea ports, which generally consume in half the year all the grain that can be carried conveniently to their markets from the neighbouring corn lands, must be obliged to send out their money for the other half year's subsistence, notwithstanding any plenty which may be in the inland countries. So that in reality for want of water carriage there is no encouragement for the farmer to produce more corn than is sufficient for their respective neighbourhoods: and whilst they labour under these difficulties, all the laws they can devise for the encrease of tillage will for ever fail of success. Were these difficulties once removed, instead of sending out above threescore thousand pounds for grain and flour, which they have done at a medium for these three years past, they might export without creating any scarcity, above double that value every year; and what a difference that would make to the publick there is no need to say.

Perhaps there is no country in the world that can boast of a greater number of large and commodious harbours or havens than this island; as the reader would acknowledge if it was proper for me to enumerate and describe them. The harbour of Dublin however may be thought to deserve some particular notice; as being the harbour of the metropolis, and consequently more frequented with shipping than any other, because of the commodities which are necessarily imported into it for use and luxury. There is a bar however in the mouth of this harbour, which at the ebb and neap tide is somewhat dangerous to ships that are heavy laden. Those which draw more than seven or eight feet water can go no nearer Dublin than Ringsend a mile distant from it; and the ships of less burthen are obliged to take the flood to come up to the key. This harbour has been much mended by the ballast act in Queen ANNE's time; for before, at low water the whole haven was so dry, as well below Ringsend as above it, that a person might walk round the ships at anchor, except in two little creeks on the sides of it, in which ships may ride in nine or ten feet water at the lowest ebb. But there is not an approach to any city perhaps in the world, which strikes the eye of a stranger with more delight, and prejudices him more in favour of the country to which he is going, than the harbour of Dublin; the land all

Harbours.
BOATE.

round being disposed into such variety of hills and plains, and so many villa's of the nobility and gentry, most of them white, being scattered about them. As we gradually lose sight of these, and the eye is bounded by the city and the ships in the pool, the river becomes walled on each side, 'till you arrive at the keys which have been already mentioned. In short the whole deserves a more particular description than it is proper for me to give here.

One cannot look back on the situation of this island, its soil and produce and the many noble harbours which it contains, without perceiving that it hath advantages for trade and commerce, equal if not superior to any country in the world ; and, indeed, to speak impartially, not without lamenting that it does not avail itself of these advantages in a much greater degree than it does at present. The reader must excuse my stopping here in order to make some reflexions upon this head. It is a matter of the greatest importance to this nation, as well as that, to form our opinions upon it with clearness and precision : and yet it is a point which does not seem to be rightly understood by the generality of either nation ; for, according to an observation of the great and good bishop BERKLY, tho' it is the true interest of both nations to become one people, yet neither seem apprized of this truth.

MOLYNEUX
Anonym.

On their side it is said, that the bulk of their inhabitants are the descendents of Englishmen ; that they are so far from being a conquered or tributary people, that it was thro' the blood and spirit of their ancestors that the English scepter was swayed there at first ; and that the security of the crown there at this day, is the strength and loyalty of the people of Ireland, who are more engaged to secure the interests of the crown of England, than the king is to take care of them. Indeed it is said, if we would speak with accuracy upon this subject, that it is a vulgar error to call them a conquered people ; and to speak of the land without the people is in this case saying nothing at all : that if we are to understand by conquest, an invasion of a kingdom by force of arms, to which force had likewise been opposed — and in any other sense why is Ireland not to be deemed a free country ? — then it is certain that
this

this island was never so conquered by HENRY II. The civil and ecclesiastical states of Ireland made a voluntary submission to him without the least hostile stroke on any side, which exempts them from the consequences of a violent conquest : and if he had been opposed by the inhabitants, it was only the ancient race of the Irish that could suffer by this subjugation : neither the English who came over and conquered with him, nor their descendants, can in reason lose the immanities of free born subjects. One of the articles of impeachment against the Earl of STRAFFORD, was his affirming that Ireland was a conquered country : and no speech said PYM, one of the managers of the commons—could be fuller fraught with treason to the English state ; since it tended to create a general disaffection in the whole people of Ireland to the common government. It is therefore concluded that they ought not to be held in such subjection, nor cramped so much in their commerce, as they are by England.

In answer to this it is said on our side, that as HENRY II. subdued Ireland by means of an English army, that country became annexed to the imperial crown or kingdom of England, but not to the person of the king : That this subduction was then esteemed to be a conquest, and is much more to be accounted so than WILLIAM the First acquisition of the crown of England ; and that Ireland was thereby most certainly brought under the jurisdiction of the parliamentary authority of England : That the entire submission of the people to the government of England, their receiving its laws, and being and endowed with all the privileges of Englishmen, made the island become a member of annexed to the English empire, and gave England a just title to exercise a perpetual jurisdiction over them : That all the concessions made Ireland empowering them to hold parliaments, &c. can be understood no otherwise, than that they should be enabled to devise and enact such laws when occasion required as were suitable to the circumstances of that country : But that no grant ever did, or ever could, make Ireland a separate distinct kingdom independent of England, or invest it with such supreme legislature as is inherent in the king with the advice and consent of the Lords and Commons of England in Parliament assembled ;

assembled ; and therefore that the English settlements in Ireland, always were, and ever must be, accounted as a colony of England ; which, as such, hath been supported and protected always by her, and to whose interests in commerce she ought always to contribute and submit.

It is unnecessary to enter into the discussion of this point any further here ; which will have a properer place in the history of that time. It was expedient however to take notice of the controversy thus far, in order to account for the erroneous notions, which, I had said, both the kingdoms seem to entertain of their true interest ; for I take this to have been the spring or fountain of their error. On the one hand, the people of Ireland, looking upon themselves as free born subjects, their kingdom as distinct and independent, and as never having been conquered, revolt against the prohibition of their woollen commerce by the English Parliament ; and as tho' no other commerce could employ them, and wealth was to be derived to them from no other—perhaps because it is prohibited—they run their wool to the enemies of England ; and by that means have enabled them to undersell us, and to take the market for the woollen trade in a great measure out of our hands. Tho we have given great encouragement to the linen manufacture, which should be considered as the staple trade of the nation, and tho' if all their sheep walks were to be converted into tillage for hemp and flax, and all the labouring hands of the island were to be employed in that manufacture, they would always find a market for it, and their mother country would be greatly benefited by by it, yet this does not content them.

On the other hand, the people of England, considering the inhabitants of that island as a colony sent from hence to possess a country that we had conquered, and that it has cost us an immense sum of money and a deluge of blood to reestablish them in their possessions, claim an absolute sovereignty over them, and to limit and direct their commerce as we please : and as the woollen is the staple manufacture of England, we prohibited their exportation to every other part of the world, any wool wrought or unwrought, and to England every thing of that kind
but

but wool and yarn. Thus, as tho' the world was not wide enough for us and them, and as tho' we thought that every shilling got by the Irish was defrauding us of it, because we assert that we have a right to limit and direct their trade, so in order to exercise that right their woollen branch was quite extinguished. Had it been limited indeed to cloths of a particular breadth and fineness, to such alone as our rivals undersell us in, there might have been some good policy in this restraint: and if we ever mean to recover it out of the hands of the French and Dutch, it must be by acting contrary to the way in which we lost it. We lost it by driving the Irish to a better market for their wool than England, with too rigid an exertion of our authority over them, and by the high taxes and high living of our people: and it is only to be recovered by admitting the Irish to share with us in the profits—which may be confined to ratteens, draps, kerfies, or even to undied cloth, and half manufactured, which shall receive their full perfection only in England—who have no taxes on their milk and potatoes, who live cheaper than any other manufacturers in Europe, and who can consequently undersell all the world. This will effectually prevent their running the wool to France or Holland, whose manufactures therefore must in a great measure fall; and it will as effectually restore it to the English. Even the profits made by the Irish would eventually center here. But we seem ignorant of this in England; and this ignorance occasions the capital error of our conduct towards this people. It is fit therefore that it should be explained.

It appears from the custom-house books, that the imports of Ireland from Great Britain alone, amount to near five parts in eight of their whole importation, and which consist chiefly of commodities worked up to the height; and it will be found perhaps on examination, that they take off a much greater quantity of the several manufactures of England, except our woollen, than any other country in Europe. On the other hand, the woollen yarn and worsted which we receive from them, so far from being a loss to the nation as most importations are, when fully manufactured by us in England, will sell for two hundred thousand

F pounds

Anonym.

pounds a year more than the prime cost, in foreign markets. In the same manner their linen yarn, which we work up into tickens, tapes, girths and other manufactures, yield an annual profit of an hundred thousand pounds : to say nothing of the raw hides, linen, and tallow, which we export from them into foreign countries and our plantations to great advantage. It appears also from the estimates of the tunnage of shipping employed yearly in the trade of Ireland, that the British tunnage is more than two thirds of the whole, from which there arises a profit to us of above threescore thousand pounds a year in this article of freight only in the Irish trade : and as their exportations as well as their freight are principally carried on by English merchants, it may reasonably be computed that a profit of eighty thousand pounds a year arises to England from their exports considered in this light. Add to all these advantages, the greatest perhaps of all, that which arises from the nobility and people of estate and employment who spend their incomes in England, and then it will evidently appear, that if England does not gain by Ireland alone, half as much yearly as it does by all the world beside, as many people suppose, yet there is no country in Europe that brings so much profit to another, as Ireland does to England. Before the Irish Papists were thoroughly reduced by CROMWELL, that kingdom was only a dead weight upon England : it had little or no trade, few or no manufactures, and a very small vent for English consumable commodities. Poverty and the effects of war supplied the place of luxury ; and the Irish gentlemen were not rich enough to be absentees. It was then that maxim was received into the English Politicks, “ that keeping Ireland poor was of great advantage to England ; ” and therefore it was necessary to cramp her trade and discourage her manufactures. Nor was this opinion ill founded at the time it was formed. Experience had too fully shewn our Ancestors, that as long as the Popish or Irish interest was superior, the more powerful the natives were, and the greater disturbances were created to England, they either struggled to throw off the English government, or else to establish the Popish religion. But though that kingdom still bears the name of Ireland, and the Protestant inhabitants are called

called Irish, with old Ideas annexed to those names of opposition to the English interest, and though these Ideas are so strongly associated, like ghosts and darkness, that most of our countrymen find it difficult to separate them, yet the scene is quite changed from what it was when such a disadvantageous way of thinking about Ireland took rise. Almost all the lands of Ireland are in possession of the descendants of English Protestants, linked in the strongest manner, as well by civil and religious interest, as by inclinations, to the fortunes of Great Britain.

A computation was made about thirty years ago, that the profit arising to us from all our plantations and islands in America, never exceeded seventeen hundred thousand pounds a year : and at the same time it was thought, at the lowest calculation, that we gained from Ireland alone fourteen hundred thousand. From hence it will follow, that the improvements made in Ireland have had the same effect on England, by employing her poor, bringing wealth into the nation, and encreasing the number of shipping, as if the same improvements had been made in Yorkshire or any county in England : and therefore though their people were more fully employed than they are, though their exports were enlarged, and their gain from other nations by a greater liberty of trade were much more considerable than it is, yet very little of this wealth would stay with them, but it would as naturally flow to England as the river does to the ocean. It is therefore OUR interest to give the people of Ireland full employment, to encourage their industry in every branch of trade, and not to stop any inlet through which their treasure may come in, since every acquisition or profit they can make will at last center amongst us. It is THEIR interest not to extend their commerce to such manufactures or commodities, as will prejudice their mother country which protects and defends them in the enjoyment of their property, but to cultivate the manufactures which lie open to them ; and which at the same time that it would give full employment to all their people, and be a source of wealth and comfort, would be a real advantage to their friends in England. The importance of the subject to both nations must

be the apology for this long digression : and to those who read it with the same intention with which all history should be read, the apology will be sufficient.

Woods.

Mff.

BOATE.

Anonym.

There was so much wood in Ireland in the earliest ages, that one of the names which it had from foreigners was the “ Island of Woods ;” given to it, say the old historians, by one whom NINU the son of BEL sent to discover it. Indeed by all the writings and monuments of ancient time, whether there is any truth in the old Irish saying or not—“ that it was thrice under the plow-share, thrice it was wood, and thrice it was bare”—it appears that as long as the land was in possession of the native Irish, it was full of woods on every side. Thus in digging out the earth for a new canal from Loughneagh to Dublin for an inland navigation, which will presently be taken notice of, a forest as it may be called was discovered under ground ; a vast number of fallen trees of ash, oak, alder, &c. lying near a mile in length under a covering of earth, in some places six, in others eight foot deep, many of them of large bulk tumbled down one over another, some lying in strait lines, and others in a transverse or oblique position. Many discoveries of this kind are continually made all over the island ; and there is scarce a bog but what affords plenty of timber buried in it, cut down no doubt by some of the first inhabitants in order to make room for tillage and pasture : but in a long course of time they have been covered over by a stagnation of waters, which the trees themselves, being thus felled and disposed of, might have first occasioned, and by the high lands being dissolved with repeated rains, and, together with the earthy particles of rain water, lodging upon them. The names of many forests thus reduced are still preserved ; and they were in the early times so numerous as to be a great incumbrance ; as appears from many instances in the ancient history. But since the conquest, in order as well to furnish timber for their houses, and convert the land into more profit, as to deprive the rebels and robbers of their lurking-holes and places of refuge, the greatest part of the woods have been reduced to arable and pasture ground, or turned into bogs. Indeed they have been so much reduced, that the inhabitants in general not only want

wood

wood for firing, but to carry on the business of building and repairing houses.

It is strange that in a country, where about an hundred years ago near a fourth part of the profitable land was under forests, they should now be reduced to the necessity of planting, or submit to an expence, which, at a medium for the last three years, amounted to above fifty-five thousand pounds a year. But besides the reasons which I have already assigned for such a reduction, the people of England, and many foreigners, were used to build a great deal of shipping there, as frequently as they they now go to their ports to victual them; and many landlords tied their tenants to burn nothing but wood, and to cut down so many acres a year. This in some time helped to clear the land in a good measure; their buildings and spendthrifts, with the tanners and iron works, soon devoured the remainder; and their planting now goes on as slowly, as if they still remembered the inconveniences which their ancestors laboured under from the immense woods in their days. A great deal however, it must be owned, hath been done in this way within these thirty years, but a great deal more remains yet to be done: and if, instead of making new purchases, their gentry would improve their old estates, by draining and planting and making hedge-rows and inclosures with all the arts of good husbandry (the expence of trees and ditches being trivial, and the work being performed by their own poor cottagers and tenants at low wages) this would be an advancement of their estates perhaps to double value, at only four or five years purchase; and would at the same time be of great utility and ornament to their country. Of the same benefit perhaps it might be to both, if their gentry were allowed by law, to bequeath a limited quantity of acres thus planted with forest trees, to encrease the small provision which many of them make for their younger children, and to assign a proper time for cutting them down, and carrying them off.

Of the mines which are now in Ireland, there were none that we know of that were discovered by the ancient Irish, nor by the English till the latter end of the reign of Queen ELIZABETH. Since that period

Mines.

BOATE.
SMITH.
WALSH.
Anonym.

period many mines of iron, and some of lead and silver mixed, have been found in divers parts of the island. This hath given rise to an opinion of many skilfull people that the mountains of Ireland are full of metals ; and that if the same care and diligence had been used by the inhabitants of that country in former ages as there hath been since the period abovementioned, many more might have been discovered ; not of the same kind only with those which are now worked, but of others also, and perhaps even of gold itself. We find a commission in RYMER, granted by EDWARD the Third, in the year thirteen hundred and sixty, to the Justiciary and Treasurer of Ireland and the Archbishop of Dublin, to make a trial of the mines of gold and silver, which, he says in the commission, he was informed were to be found in many parts of Ireland : but what was the issue of their experiment we are not told. Out of a rivulet in the county of Tyrone called Miola, which rises in the mountain Slowgalen, has been gathered a drachm of pure gold : and it is not an uncommon thing for rivers, which proceed from mountains that have gold within their bowels, to carry it along with their sand, out of which it is collected by poor people. But the account of this gold, which was given to the historian who relates it only on report, is said by later writers to want confirmation, and that perhaps upon enquiry it might degenerate into copper ; of which there have been great discoveries, particularly in the counties of Wicklow and Kerry, and in other parts of the island.

In answer to this objection which is founded only upon conjecture, it may be observed, that much older writers have mentioned the gold mines of Ireland, though they have not described or pointed them out, as well as EDWARD the Third, in the commission above-recited. We are told that they were discovered in the days of Paganism under the tenth Milesian monarch, and so much use was made of them, that the succeeding monarch ordained, that all the gentry should wear golden chains about their necks. The chronicles of the next reign take notice, that gold rings were then first used in Ireland ; and a few years after silver shields were brought in fashion, by a monarch who acquired the title of Airy-theach, which imported “silvered”. A silver seal of one of the Kings of Connaught, and a bit of a bridle of solid gold of ten ounces, which

were found in digging in some grounds, were sent as a present to King CHARLES the First, by the Earl of STRAFFORD. A great number of goldsmiths are mentioned by several writers : and we are told that there is scarce an instance in their ancient history of any chalice, viol, or utensil dedicated to sacred uses in the church or at the altar, other than of pure gold or silver ; which might probably give rise to this opinion of their mines. But to pass by these uncertain conjectures for the present, I shall trouble the reader with an account only of the mines which are now discovered.

The Iron mines, which I shall begin with, are of three sorts, the bog, the rock, and the mountain mine ; which last is again distinguished, into white, pin, and shell mine. Besides these there are three mines of lead and silver mixed ; so rich, that from one in the county of Antrim, every thirty pounds of lead yielded a pound of pure silver. The veins of another mine in the county of Tipperary, which gives the name of Silver-mines to a market town there, commonly rise within three or four spit deep from the surface, the land being mountainous and barren, and yield two different sorts of ore : the one, which is most usual, is of a reddish colour hard and glistering, and the other like a marle blueish and softer than the first, though judged much the best and to produce the greatest quantity of silver. The ore has yielded generally about three pounds of silver out of a tun, besides a great deal of lead, and some quicksilver, which made it very valuable. In the time of Lord STRAFFORD's administration, he sent an ingott of silver to King CHARLES the First, of three hundred ounces from the Royal mines of Ireland : and in about four years after, he tells the Secretary of State in one of his letters, " that the lead mines in Munster were so rich, that every fodder of lead" — which may be meant of a load — " had in it to the value of thirty pounds of fine silver.

There are several considerable collieries in many parts of the island, probably enough to supply all Europe with coals : and yet at a medium for these three last years, it appears that they have imported of this commodity annually from Great Britain, to very near the amount of an hundred.

dred thousand pounds ; though the price of coals at Dublin is seldom much more than half what it is at London. There is a coalmine which was discovered by accident in digging for iron ore, which is more than enough to supply the island, and all the people living near it make use of no other firing ; but being situated far from any navigable river, there is but little resort to it except from the inhabitants in its neighbourhood. There is however such an obvious remedy for this misfortune of its situation, that in these days of improvement it is surprising it hath not been practised ; and if it is impracticable to bring the commodity to a market, they should endeavour to carry a market to the commodity. It is probable that Birmingham and Sheffield were erected upon the spot of ground on which they are — the two principal towns in England for hard ware of every kind which is to be worked with fire — because those spots were in the neighbourhood of very great and extensive collieries. Thus artists and manufacturers, may, with some expence and good management, be brought together also in those parts of Ireland where coals abound, 'till they encrease into little towns : and a people living thus close together, would not only cause a consumption of this fuel, but add soil to the land, improve the adjacent country, raise the value of estates where they settle, and bring riches into the kingdom by their labour.

Another discovery was made of a colliery bordering on Loughneagh ; and an act of parliament passing about thirty years ago to encourage the draining of bogs and unprofitable low lands, a canal was made at a great expence in order to bring coals from it to Dublin ; but, for some reason or other, of little profit that way to the publick. There is a very considerable colliery at Ballycastle in the county of Antrim, and great sums have been given by parliament to make a harbour for the transportation of them, but without effect ; the piles being destroyed by a worm in a few years. Whether this evil could not be remedied by stone piers, in a country where stone is much more plentiful than wood, is a question perhaps that would not be pertinent if one was acquainted with the place ; but without knowing any particular reasons to the
contrary

contrary, it is an obvious question, and very natural. But whatever are the reasons for not working the other coal pits in the island, there cannot surely be a sufficient reason, why those near the Barrow, a fine navigable river, may not be carried down to Waterford, and come very cheap to Dublin. Nor indeed does it seem to be a sufficient improvement, or what they should content themselves with, to bring their own coals to Dublin; but their merchants might easily, and with good profit, raise a fund there for laying in a good stock of them when they are cheap, to furnish the poor with at a low rate, and in small quantities in winter. This would be of great service to enable the manufacturers to work cheap, and prevent those combinations and extortions which both rich and poor are now liable to; and to remedy which the Parliament is obliged frequently to interpose. In short they might not only furnish themselves with their own coals, for which such an immense sum is now sent annually out of the kingdom, but might also export them to Holland at high prices, and employ a great deal of shipping to the benefit of the publick.

To the metals and minerals which have been mentioned, may be added the quarries of slate and stone and marble, which are in many parts of Ireland in great plenty, and of a very valuable species. In the county of Waterford particularly there is a fine black marble without any mixture; another black and white; a grey marble beautifully clouded and spotted like some kinds of shagreen; and besides these, a variegated sort composed of several colours, as brown, white, yellow, and blue; blended into various shades and figures very beautiful, and all of them capable of a fine high polish. In short, marble abounds almost every where; but the most famous place for it is the county of Kilkenny, where it is cut and polished by a watermill. Kildare house in Dublin — the most magnificent Town-house perhaps in Europe — and the Provost's-house at the college, are built of marble from Ardbracon in the county of Meath, which polishes to a dove-colour. The stone which they call Mountain grit, of which the Parliament house, the College, and most of the modern structures in Dublin are built, is in colour nearly equal and mixes well with our Portland stone, but is much superior to it in

hardness. The Kerry stones, which are worked by jewellers, and set in necklaces and sleeve buttons, are greatly superior to those of Bristol, being almost as hard as a flint ; some of them are of a fine light brown, and others not inferior in colour to the amethyst.

Orig. Inhab.

Mss.

U. History.

Dissertat.

HUTCHINS.

CAMDEN.

WARE.

Having given the reader this general view of the exterior of the country which I am introducing to his acquaintance in the following work, I shall now proceed to give some account of the inhabitants, their laws and language, religion, manners, and government, as far as it can be collected out of the rubbish, and distinguished from the fables of the most ancient authors. Tho' it is impossible to deduce the original of any nation with truth and certainty which is not found in Scripture, and it may therefore be thought in vain to look for authorities any where else, yet where profane and sacred history coincide, or where the former is not repugnant to the latter, some little traces may be drawn and conjectures formed with probability : at least nobody can presume to say that they are false and groundless. As to the order or method wherein the first plantations of the earth were made, some have imagined there was little or none, and that each colony settled where they did by chance ; every one seizing on such countries as it casually arrived at. But if we consider with any attention the account which is given of this transaction by the sacred historian, we shall find nothing more foreign from his intention than such a precipitate and confused dissipation. For we are told with regard to the sons of JAPHET, the eldest branch of NOAH's posterity, " that by these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their " lands, every one after his tongue, after their families in their nations." By the isles of the Gentiles is understood, among all ancient writers, the islands of Europe ; of which the British islands, as being the largest, must be allowed to be the chief. These therefore were the portion of the descendents of JAPHET ; and accordingly JOSEPHUS tells us, that the Celtes, or Gauls, were descended from GOMER his eldest son. To this may be added the concurrent testimony of many ancient fathers and historians to prove that GOMER was their founder : And if this is not sufficient, we may bring another witness in CLUVERIUS, who proves that

that the ancient Celtic nation, which among other regions, he says, included the Britannic and Northern isles, did all speak the same language from GOMER, which was preserved among his descendants. MR. VOLTAIRE indeed is pleased to treat the peopling of the West, by the descendants of GOMER, as a vain conceit, and calls it a fiction of the East: but he is too great a genius to tread in the common track, and of all historians has the least reason to talk in this manner; because he frequently substitutes his own vain conceits in the room of incontestable evidence and authority; as his many falsifications of our own history prove.

At what particular period it was that these Celtes migrated into Europe, and even when they had got footing in the pleasant and more Southern parts of it, how long it was before they spread themselves so far Northward as to these our regions, it is difficult, if not impossible, for us to say. The most ancient foreign history of any credit will give no light into this transaction; but we may safely venture to pronounce, I believe, that it was not immediately after the dispersion of mankind at Babel, as the old Irish historians would fain persuade us. For it is in the highest degree absurd to suppose, that they could come into Europe or these isles by sea with such a numerous retinue, so long before any thing of navigation, even by coasting, was at all known in the world. Nor is it indeed much more reasonable to imagine, that they would traverse the ocean to these islands 'till they found themselves too much straitened in the more pleasant climates of the South; which in all probability was not till a good while after their first migration into Europe. This is sufficient to discredit the old Irish histories, as to the very high antiquity of the first inhabitants; the most reasonable of those writers deducing it from the dispersion of mankind at Babel, when JAPHET and his posterity, they say, emboldened by NOAH'S example, ventured to commit themselves by ships upon the sea, to search out the unknown corners of the world, and so found out this Western island. But tho' this very high antiquity may be justly disputed for many reasons, yet I think it is not to be doubted, that these Northern countries were peopled more early than the generality of critics are inclined to allow. MOSES tells us

G 2

that

the isles of the Gentiles were inhabited, which all interpreters acknowledge to mean the islands of Europe : and the great antiquity of the language of the original Irish, which will be hereafter proved to be the same with the ancient Celtic, shews the great antiquity of the nation, and that these elements were imported and brought into Ireland, when the use of letters was in its infancy. The old Celtic bears so great an affinity to the ancient Hebrew, that to those who are masters of both, they appear plainly to be only dialects of the same tongue ; or, to speak perhaps more properly, the Celtic is a dialect of the Hebrew. This surely lays a fair foundation for an ancient history to be built upon ; for a nation and language are both of an age, and if a language be ancient, the people must be as old.

Upon the whole it seems highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that the British isles were first peopled by the ancient and warlike Gomerians, corruptly after called Cymbrians ; which last name, as well as the language of that nation, or rather a dialect of it, is still preserved in the north part of Wales. In a short time after the peopling of Britain, as Ireland in clear weather may be discerned by the eye from most of the northern, and from some of its western parts, it is natural to suppose that many adventurers transported themselves thither and possessed the Island. There is scarcely any thing more difficult than to settle the chronology of such very ancient colonies ; but by comparing one historian with another, and from what still remains of known appellations and events, it seems reasonable to imagine, that Ireland was thus first inhabited. The nearness of the countries, and the affinity in language and customs civil and religious used among the ancient Britons, may well induce us to believe that they had the same original, and were peopled much at the same time. Thus Ireland was anciently called a British isle, by PLINY, POLYBIUS, &c. and the manners of the ancient Britons and Hibernians were much the same. The soil and climate, the customs and dispositions of the people, says TACITUS, speaking of the Irish, differ little from those of Britain. This account is confirmed also by two of the oldest historians that we have. NENNIUS, a Briton who flourished in the year of CHRIST eight hundred and fifty, says, “ If any one would know how long Ireland was desert and uninhabited, the most knowing of the Scots—the name then in Britain for the Irish—have told me thus ;

thus; "The Scythians in the fourth age of the world obtained Ireland;" and this fourth age, according to his computation, was from the time of DAVID. HENRY HUNTINGDON is still more particular, and says, "The Britons in the third age of the world came into Britain, and the Scots into Ireland in the fourth." Why they computed the fourth age of the world from the time of DAVID, this is not the place to relate; but it is allowed that he was anointed king over Judah about a thousand and fifty years before the Christian æra; which is the same period exactly in which the best Irish historians affirm their country was invaded by the Scythians out of Spain. Let it be observed that there is no contradiction at all in allowing, that these descendents from JAPHET, by MAGOG his second son, might some time after possess themselves of the southern parts of Ireland from Spain, as the Gomerians, afterwards called Gauls, had peopled the northern and eastern parts from Britain; and as they sprang from the same original, their manners and language would probably differ but very little.

But to say the truth, historians have been so confounded by their variety of names, migrations, and exploits, that it is not easy to know, whether they speak of the same nation under different names, or of two distinct people. At least it is evident, that HERODOTUS, PTOLOMY, and JUSTIN, to name no more, have called the Scythians by some names, and attributed some actions and places to them, which upon closer examination have been found to belong to the Celtes or Gomerians whom they had driven out of their territories. The ancient geographer STRABO, noted for his accuracy, tells us, that the old Greek historians gave the name of Scythians and Celto-Scythians to all the inhabitants of the northern regions; though it is plain that a considerable part of them were properly Celtes or Gomerians. He adds that these, which were likewise called Iberi and Celt-Iberi, peopled Spain and Gaul, and from thence went into the neighbouring countries; and amongst the rest came over into Britain and Ireland.

If for the reasons above mentioned many learned men have chose to reckon them as one people, branched out into that variety of names and characters under which they are distinguished by various authors, it is no wonder that the old Irish historians who were not learned should run into this mistake, and confound the Scythians with the Gomerians. But we are told by Mr.

INNES,

INNES, " that the first inventors, as he calls them, of the genealogies of the Irish bring their descent from GOMER as being JAPHET's eldest son ; and so it is set down by MACRAITH—in a manuscript in a library of the then Duke of CHANDOS—one of the most famous Irish genealogists ; and the Scots have still retained it [a]. I must confess, after reading all that I could find written on every side ancient and modern, I am inclined to think with Bishop STILLINGFLEET, that some of the Celtes from Britain, who in STRABO are called Iberi, passed over into Ireland in a very early age of the world ; and that afterwards some of the Scythians coming from Spain into Britain, and finding it peopled went into Ireland, and subduing the first settlers took possession of that island. Of the same opinion is the celebrated British antiquarian LHUYD in the preface to his Glossography ; which he supports by reasons that are drawn from a comparison of the original languages, and which seem conclusive to an impartial and unprejudiced mind. See here then the original of the ancient Irish : and if all other proof of it were wanting, the pride and sloth of the common people, who have not mixed in the affairs of love or marriage with the English, would be a strong presumption of their affinity with the Spaniards. But it is said there are very few of the better sort of the Irish whose ancestors have not intermarried with the new comers ; and that the best Irish and the best English families have been so blended by alliances of this sort, that there are scarce any remains of the noble Milesian stock entire and unmixed. As to the other part of the inhabitants, which for the sake of distinction I call the people of Ireland, and who, though not half perhaps in number, yet have got the most considerable footing in point of rank and property, it is unnecessary to say any thing more of their descent, than that their ancestors in different ages, since the latter end of the twelfth century, were adventurers from Britain.

Language.
O FLAHER.
WARE.
Univ. Hist.
Dissertat.

There is no difficulty in determining whence the original Irish language was derived ; though if we assent to what is said by their old historians, we must either believe that one GATHELUS was the founder of it, and that he devised it out of all other languages then known in the world, or that PARTHOLANUS a branch of JAPHET who first seized on Ireland, brought the same kind of language that befell his family at the desolation of Babel. But the first is too fabulous to deserve any attention ; and the last is not exactly true. The language of Ireland at its first peopling, if no proof ex-

[a] Critical Essay on the ancient inhabitants of North Britain, p. 485.

isted of it, we might reasonably conclude must be the original Celtic or Gomerian; which was universally spoken over Europe at that time, and is judged the most original and unmixed language yet remaining. A very ingenious Irish writer, Mr. O CONNOR, [*b*] mentioned in the preface, to whom this volume owes great assistance of a private as well as a public nature, claims the preference of their own to all other Celtic dialects, in point of purity, if not antiquity, and affirms that the ancient Celtic is to this day a living language in Ireland. The reader shall now see this proved plainly by Dr. RAYMOND, once a fellow of Trinity College at Dublin, and perhaps the best and most learned antiquarian that Ireland ever produced. He tells us, [*c*] that, in order to discover the original of the Irish nation, he was at the pains to compare all the European languages with that of Ireland, which he observed to have little agreement with any of them. This put him on having recourse to the Celtic, the original language of the ancient Celtæ; who were likewise called Scythians by the most ancient Greek writers. He examined the Celtic by LHUDY's and PEZRON's Vocabularies, and found a great affinity between them: but reading the Lord's prayer in above an hundred languages, versions, and characters, printed at London in seventeen hundred, he discovered the Irish language to be the very same with the Celtic, as will appear by the specimens of them in that prayer; and which for the satisfaction of the curious shall be given below [*d*]. There being such an exact agreement between them, and the

[*b*] Dissertations on the Ant. Hist. of Ireland, An. 1753. p. 37, 8.

[*c*] Introduction to the Hist. of Ireland, p. 2.

[*d*] C E L T I C A.

1. Our narme ata ar neamb'.
2. Beanich * a tanim.
3. Go diga do riogda.
4. Go denta du hoil, air talm in marte ar neamb'.
5. Tabuar deim a niugh ar naran limb'ali.
6. Agus mai duine ar fiach amhail near marmhid ar fiacha.
7. Na leig sin amb'aribh ach foar sa shin on olc.
8. Or sletfa rioghta comtha agus gloir go sibh'ri. Amen.

[*d*] H I B E R N I C A.

1. Arnathair ata ar neamb'.
2. Naomhthar * hainm.
3. Tigheadh do rioghachd.
4. Deantar do thoil aran talam mar do nithear ar neamh.
5. Ar naran laothamhail, tabhair dhuinn a nin.
6. Agus maith dhuinn ar bhfiaca mar mhaithmidne darbh feitheamh naibh fein.
7. Agus na leig sin a ccathughadh, achd faor inno olc.
8. Oir as leachd fein an Rioghachd agus an chumhachd agus an gloir go fíor rui-
ghe. Amen.

* Beanich and Naomhthar, and Amb'aribh and Cathughadh, have the same signification in the Irish; the other words are the same. I take the omission or addition of letters to be the fault of the press. Raymond's Introduction, p. 3.

Irish having no affinity with any other known language in the world, excepting the Hebrew and Phenician, this is sufficient he thinks to procure that credit to the Irish history which it may justly challenge ; and which, for want of proving a point of that importance, they have not hitherto met with. For if it can be made out beyond all contradiction, that the use of letters in this island was as early as the relations in any history which is allowed to be authentic, then the common objection against the credit of the Irish histories, that the use of letters began here after the entrance of Christianity, will be wholly removed.

These specimens are observed by MR. O'CONNOR to be the same in words and syntax, allowing only for the errors of transcribers ; which by an extraordinary fate, considering their ignorance and negligence, happen not to be very considerable. Hear how he accounts for its preservation amongst the Irish. " Whatever changes this original language might have suffered on the continent, there can be no wonder in the preservation of its primitive syntax in Ireland, when we consider the many schools and colleges kept here through most ages, and the genius of the people so much turned to literature and philological learning : add to this a form of government, in which oratory and eloquence became absolutely necessary to bolster up the selfish motives of ambition, a continued security from abroad, and the same popular government ever prevailing at home [*e*]." There are but eighteen letters in the Irish alphabet, of which a third part are vowels : and as such a proportion must declare both softness and harmony, so it is clear of those harsh sounds so frequently to be met with in all other Celtic dialects. The letters are ranged in a different order, from the alphabet of the Romans, as the reader will see below [*f*], and which was brought thither in the fourth century by the Christian missionaries. All this added to

[*e*] Dissertations, ut supra, p. 42.

[*f*] THE IRISH FEADA.

1 B	Beth.	7 D	Duir.	13 R	Ruis.
2 L	Luis.	8 T	Tinue.	14 A	Ailm.
3 N	Nion.	9 C	Coll.	15 O	Ou.
4 F	Fearn.	10 M	Muin.	16 U	Ur.
5 S	Suil.	11 G	Gort.	17 E	Eadhadh.
6 H	Uath.	12 P	Peth-boc.	18 I	Idho.

the paucity of their numbers and distinct powers, shews evidently, says the same writer, “ that those elements were imported before the additional cyphers were invented, and before any commerce began between our ancestors and the learned nations : And these extraordinary facts summed up together fairly account for the use of letters in Ireland from the first entrance of the Iberian Spaniards, whom we now call the Scottish or Milesian colony [*f*].”

I shall not however conceal from the reader, that MR. INNES has spent about thirty pages [*g*], to shew that the Irish had not the use of letters before S. PATRICK, and that their proper names to express, Letters, a Book, to Read, Write, &c. are all derived from the Latin. But if the Irish is the Celtic language, as seems to be incontestably proved above, which the first inhabitants might bring with them from Britain or Spain, then this writer himself hath furnished us with an answer to all this labour'd criticism in two or three lines, by saying “ that the name of BARD is originally Celtic, from whence the Greeks and Latins had it.” Nay he owns in the same page, that the Irish is originally a dialect of the Celtic. Instead therefore of the Irish borrowing their words from the Latin as abovementioned, why may not the Latins have taken these from the Celtic, as well as that of Bard ? The Abbe PEZRON has made it appear they have done this with regard to the names of all the days in the week, most of the days of the month, the word Disco, to learn, and above three hundred other words which he hath given a list of [*h*]. In short the great argument upon which so much stress is laid by this Scottish writer, and by others upon his authority, falls entirely to the ground for want of truth to support it. So far is it from being true, “ that there are no expressions or terms in the Irish language for Letters, “ Book, Reading, Writing &c. as being all things of which the Irish had “ never any use before the time of S. PATRICK,” that they had original terms for these in their own proper language, without borrowing them from the Latins ; as the reader may see below [*i*]. In order to get rid of

[*f*] Dissertations, p. 45.

[*g*] Crit. Essay, p. 440 — 468.

[*h*] Antiqu. of all nations, p. 200 and sequ.

[*i*] A Letter, Fíodh. A Book, Cíon. Science, Ealadha, Creath. History, Seanchus. Philosophy, Fíleacht. Law, Dlígíadh, Feneachus. Poetry, Dan, Duáin, &c.

the difficulty of the entire disagreement between the alphabets, MR. INNES roundly asserts upon his own authority, "that the Bethluis-nion is nothing else but an invention of some of the Irish Sennachies, who, since they received the use of letters, have put the Latin alphabet into a new arbitrary order, and assigned to each letter the name of some tree; and that this was not the genuine alphabet of the Irish in ancient times or peculiar to them; but a bare inversion of the Latin alphabet [k]." As all this is said without any proof, suppose I should as roundly contradict it: the fact or authority of the Bethluis-nion will remain just as it did. Why did not MR. INNES produce the genuine alphabet of the Irish in ancient time, if this is not it, to support his assertion? The only answer to this must be, that he had it not in his power; for he certainly would have done it, if he had been able. But if the Irish had been so many ages in possession of the Celtic language before that of the Greeks or Romans appeared there, is it at all likely, is it credible that they had no letters nor alphabet in all that time, and that an Irish Sennachy or Bard adapted one to their language by an inversion or excision of the Roman alphabet? Let no body who can swallow this absurdity, make any objection to the fables of Irish history; he is very well qualified to digest them. Had INNES contented himself with saying, that the present letters of the alphabet were borrowed mostly from the Romans, it might have passed uncontradicted; but that does not prove, that the Irish had no alphabet nor letters of their own. Many characters of such letters are still to be seen in their old manuscripts; and a book written entirely in them is now in the possession of Dr. SULLEVAN of Trinity College. Before the use of paper or parchment, the matter on which the Irish wrote their letters, was on tables cut out of a Beech-tree and smoothed by a plane, which they inscribed with an iron pencil called a *Style*: the letters themselves were anciently termed "*Feadha*", woods, from the matter on which they were wrote, as well as because they were the names of trees; and this was the practice of other nations before paper and parchment were invented.

The discovery made by DR. RAYMOND abovementioned, of the identity of the old Celtic and Irish languages, is in my opinion a complete and

[k] Critical Essay, p. 446, 447.

irrefragable answer to all the objections which this and other writers have made to the early use of letters in Ireland. It was the want of this discovery which occasioned so much uncertainty and disagreement — as the Dr. has observed in another work [1] — in CAMDEN, USHER, WARE, and other learned antiquarians; and which had hitherto prevented a satisfactory account of the Irish history. Of these languages, he adds here “that they agree as much together, as any one of the Greek dialects doth with another, and more exactly than the languages of two remote parts in the same kingdom.” The truth of the matter with regard to S. PATRICK’S teaching the Irish the use of letters seems to be as HARRIS hath given it in his additions to WARE: that the Irish before their conversion were utterly unacquainted with the Latin letters, without the knowledge of which the Bishop considered his new converts were incapable of reading the Scriptures and other books; and consequently could not make such a progress in learning and religion as was necessary to enable them to teach their countrymen. This therefore was the cause which induced that pious apostle to teach the Latin alphabet to his converts; who being well skilled in their native letters became great proficient in the Latin elements. Even if the common opinion of the ancient historians should be admitted, that CADMUS brought the Phenician letters into Greece which were then sixteen in number, before which time the Greeks had none, yet this period being above fifteen hundred years before the Christian æra, and the Phenicians having a great trade with these Western islands — with Ireland much more than Britain — above a thousand years before the Incarnation, as the best authors testify, it seems incredible that the Phenicians should not in all that time have communicated the use of letters to the Irish; and that notwithstanding their continual commerce, the Irish should be ignorant of them, till above four hundred years after CHRIST. Even our SPENSER is of opinion “that Ireland had the use of Letters very anciently and long before England; tho’ whether they had them at their first coming into the land, or afterwards, by trading with other nations which had letters, learned them of Them, or devised them amongst themselves, is very doubtful: but that they had letters anciently is nothing doubtful.”

[1] End of Raymond’s letter to Lord Inchiquin on the Irish language and writings, p. 1.

The original and the preservation of their language having been accounted for, it must be observed of it in the general, that it not only answered all the commodious ends of speech, but bestowed all those decorations of harmony and expression which a great genius for poetry or oratory can require, in order to become master of his subject and to charm and captivate his hearers ; for it is copious without luxuriance, laconic without obscurity ; nervous, figurative, and pathetic. This is so well known of the writings of some of their poets, that a man of taste without understanding the language cannot help admiring, in a translation, the vivacity, the sublimity, and the majesty of the original, though it must be greatly lessened and impaired. Witness the poems of *OSSIAN* collected in the Highlands or isles of Scotland, translated from this language, and published about a year ago. Whether these poems were originally composed there, or in Ireland, —and it is most natural to suppose the last, for reasons which I have given the world in another place [*m*] — is not material to the present purpose. The language is that of Ireland, and its energy and sublimity is very conspicuous through the translation. But this original language, through a great length of time and an intermixture with Danes and Britons, is so much declined within these seven hundred years past, and differs so much from that which is commonly spoken, that scarce one in an hundred of the native Irish can read, write, or understand it. It is therefore to be looked for only amongst their early poets and their antiquarians, and not among the common people ; of whom it is said, that the province of Ulster has the right phrase, but not the pronunciation ; Munster the pronunciation, but not the phrase ; Leinster has neither ; and Conaught both. The famous British antiquarian *MR. LLOYD* hath told us, that by collating the languages he found one part of the Irish reconcileable to the Welsh, and by a diligent perusal of the New Testament and some manuscript papers, he had a satisfactory knowledge as to the affinity of the other part with the old Spanish, of which he has given many instances : And the conclusion he draws from it is to the purport abovementioned, that the first inhabitants of Ireland were Celtes who came from Gaul and thence into Britain, and Scythians who passed thither from some part of Spain. The former, it is

[*m*] Remarks on the Hist. of Fingal, &c. 1762.

probable, peopled the Northern and Eastern parts of the island to which their navigation was short and safe, and the latter settled in the West and South. And this accounts for the diversity of manners and dialects between the inhabitants of the one and the other part ; which was common to all the other nations of Europe, and which can be owing to nothing else but the different colonies they were first peopled with.

It is impossible to believe that learning and science of any kind should flourish, when the world itself was in its infancy : and therefore tho' we should allow — as I think we must — that the use of letters and arts was near as early in Ireland as in any other European country, yet the philosophy, learning, and religion which the historians boast so much of, from the first settlement of the Spanish colony in this island, may be justly doubted of, if not absolutely denied. There is an error indeed which is common, not to them only, but to all writers of this sort ; which is, that either they do not attend to, or at least they do not mark in their writings, the progression of learning and manners in the nations of which they write. Thus for want of marking this progression, when the Irish historians give such pompous accounts as they do of the great learning of their first progenitors, at a time that we are morally certain there was but little learning in the whole world, other people are naturally enough led to believe, that all which they say of this kind is vain and fabulous. Had they contented themselves with telling us, “ that from their commerce with the Phenicians and Egyptians in Spain, “ the colony which came from thence into Ireland had advantages, skill, “ and science superior to the other Celtic nations,” which in the course of some ages “ pushed their learning to the highest pitch that Heathen lights “ could afford ;” and after the establishment of Christianity, “ that Ireland “ became the emporium of knowledge and the sanctuary of liberty to the “ Western world ;” this would easily have gained credit with impartial people ; and if it was disputed or denied by others, it might without much difficulty be proved. But when it is said “ that, in the infancy and most confused state of their government, they never sunk into ignorance or barbarity,” and without marking with precision the progression of letters, or distinguishing the periods of which they speak, when “ the excellency of their
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“musick, their philosophy, their poetry, their constitutions of government, “and, in short, the knowledge and sciences of the great ancients” are founded so very high by these writers, indifferent people will suspect that their “*amor patriæ*” has tempted them to transgress the limits of truth. Therefore in giving an account of the learning of these people, I would be understood to carry the date of it no higher than a little before the Christian æra. My own countrymen may think that this is much too high, and the Irish will say that it is not high enough: but I write for the sake of truth and of instruction, and not for the sake of pleasing either the one or the other nation.

The Roman writers, it must be owned, in the first age of Christianity have called the Irish barbarous, unpolished, and ignorant of all virtues. But in answer to this it must be observed, that they stiled every nation barbarous and unpolished who had not been cultivated by their discipline. Many of our own writers have fallen in with this humour very absurdly, and taken them at their word. Even CAMDEN has said, that there never was in Europe any knowledge of polity, or civilized manners, or of letters, but where the Romans governed. But this, if I may be allowed to say it of so great an authority, is talking at random, and carrying the matter much too far; in the last particular especially. I say it however on the testimony of PEZRON [n], who tells us that they contemned other nations and esteemed all people Barbarians that were not Greeks or Romans; tho’ they ought to have called to mind, that they themselves not long before were treated in the same manner. Since therefore they value themselves too much to believe, or have forgot, or rather perhaps been ignorant of the obligations they laid under to those whom they have called Barbarians, it is fit posterity should know it. Even their language which they boasted so much of, a great part of it came neither from them nor the Grecians, as they have fancied, but was taken from the Celtæ or Gauls. The Latin names of the days of the week are all taken from them, of which in another place he gives the proofs. But further it may be observed, that the Romans were very far from being curious enquirers into the history of the

[m] *Antiq. of all nations, &c.* p. 181.

nations which they conquered, beyond the pale of the Grecian states. Witness the very strange and romantic account which the accurate TACITUS has given of the Jewish nation: and when a people so well known have been so grossly misrepresented by such an able historian, what good account can be expected of a Northern nation in the extremity of the West, where not a single Roman ever set his foot?

DR. RAYMOND, who with regard to Ireland is a much better authority than CAMDEN, hath told us [o], that there is no other nation in the world, that can shew clearer proof of their antiquity, history, and succession of their kings, for at least two thousand years. But should this author be suspected of partiality, MR. LHUYD the British antiquarian must stand clear of that suspicion; and in the preface to his Irish Vocabulary, he acknowledges “that it is one of the most ancient and best preserved languages in the West of Europe; that it is better situated for being preserved than any other; and that he published this work, among other reasons, that men of learning and other gentlemen might be the better able to read the Irish poetry, history, and laws, which are still in being, and ought never to be lost; and the former of which he found to be as valuable, as that of any other language in the same early age”. Howsoever our Antiquarian might be qualified to judge of this, I presume no body will doubt the capacity or authority of the Poet SPENSER; who says “that he had caused divers of the compositions of their bards to be translated to him that he might understand them; and surely they favoured of sweet wit and good invention, but skilled not of the goodly ornaments of Poetry, yet were they sprinkled with some pretty flowers of their natural device, which gave good grace and comeliness unto them [p]”.

About the period which I have mentioned, it may probably be truly said, that the learning and sciences of the Irish consisted in the study of their laws and constitution of government, in perfecting themselves in the military art, and in philosophical researches. This in process of time, and particularly in

[o] Introduction to the history of Ireland, p. 2.

[p] Spenser's works, p. 15, 8vo. edit. 1715.

the second century, became the study of their princes and legislators, as it had been before of their Druids and Philosophers; of those in short who were governors, and of those whose business it was to instruct and advise them: and as such subjects received the most lasting impressions from the power of words and harmony of numbers, so a thorough knowledge of the arts of Poetry and Musick was absolutely necessary, and encouraged to a degree of extravagance. It was therefore incumbent on all persons of rank to study these arts, deemed of divine origin, with the greatest care and application; because an ignorance in these only, was judged a sufficient objection to a man's elevation to any important services or dignities in the state, let his advantages of birth or fortune be ever so great. The professors of arts and sciences, whether learned or mechanical, were confined to their particular functions from father to son in the same family. This is not only true of their Lawyers, Physicians, Heralds, and Artizans, but likewise of their Fileahs or Philosophers, Musicians or Bards. As wise an institution as this is thought by some of their best writers, and as wise as it certainly was in those arts which required nothing but knowledge and experience, which every family might communicate to their children, as in Law, Heraldry, Mechanicks, and perhaps Physick, yet surely in those arts which depended chiefly, if not solely, upon genius, such as Poetry, Musick, and Mathematicks, it was highly ridiculous the professors should be hereditary, unless genius could be ensured or entailed in families. The institution however, it seems, was not so absolutely unalterable, as not to allow extraordinary merit its full flight upon some occasions. But be this as it will; perhaps Ireland is the only country which ever made history and the learned professions a national cause of the utmost importance to the state.

The Bards, which were an inferior order to the Druids, were as well their historians as their philosophers and their poets: for before the invention and the usage of letters, verse committed to memory was in every nation the only kind of record; and PHERECYDES, who did not live 'till an hundred years after HOMER, is reported to have been the first who wrote in prose. What TACITUS says of the ancient Germans, was no doubt true of their brethren in Ireland, "that they had no annals nor records but what were in verse". We are told that in ancient time, as old as the days of the famous Titans, the Curetes, who
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were their sages and philosophers, preserved the remembrance of their birth, their successions, their wars, and their great actions intermixed with some fables, by verses and poems, which they could say exactly by heart; and which they communicated to ORPHEUS and SANCHONIATHON, who both wrote their accounts of them thirteen hundred years before the Christian æra. If this was a practice so very ancient, it is no wonder that it should be followed by all the nations of old. Neither is it any wonder in my opinion, if the Phenicians wrote history in such an early period, who had great traffick with all these Western islands a thousand years before the incarnation, that they should teach the use of letters to the Irish: the wonder would be on the other hand if they did not. But to return. As the Bards were the only people who delivered down historical knowledge in the early ages, so the colouring and fiction natural to poetry introduced that load of fable which we meet with, not only in the Irish but in all other ancient history. “The wonderful tales which they told, and the melody with which they accompanied them, made these people the delight of the simple ages: and their knowledge of things both natural and divine, gave them a great ascendant over the spirit and belief of their contemporaries. A man who had it in his power to charm our ears, entertain our fancies, and instruct us in the history of our ancestors, who informs his wondering audience of the secret composition and hidden harmony of the universe, of the order of the seasons and the observation of days, such a man cannot miss of esteem and attention [a].” That this was the conduct of the ancient Irish appears from the testimony of all their writers.

Not only their Druids, but their Bards, who were also their philosophers and historians, were endowed by the government and chief families; and that they might not be under the necessity of attending to the cares of any other than literary occupations, they were provided for in the most ample manner: for, besides occasional benefactions, they were allowed a sufficient patrimony in fee, which were to continue hereditarily in their families from age to age. It is highly probable, that, as Ireland had the use of arts and sciences, and was known by its commerce earlier than the British isles, frequent recourse was had hither for instruction in them, by its neigh-

[a] Life of Homer, p. 104.

hours in the heathen as well as in the Christian times. A passage in DIODORUS SICULUS, quoted by Dr. SMITH in his history of Cork, in which there is an account of a northern island, little less than Sicily, situated over against the Celtæ, seems to warrant this conjecture. “ The account is, that it is fruitful, pleasant, and dedicated to APOLLO; that that God for the space of nineteen years used to come and converse with them; and, which is more remarkable, they could, as if they had the use of telescopes, shew the moon very near them, and discover therein mountains, &c. They had a large grove and temple of a round form to which the priests frequently resorted with their harps to chaunt the praises of APOLLO their great Deity. They had a language of their own, but some Greeks had been in the island, and presented valuable gifts to this temple with Greek inscriptions on them; and one ABBARIS, who became afterwards a disciple of PYTHAGORAS, went hence into Greece and contracted an intimacy with the Delians”. This is the passage as he hath extracted it, and his observations on it are these. “ The situation of this island opposite to the Celtæ who were the inhabitants of Gaul and Britain, its being compared to Sicily in size, its being dedicated to APOLLO, that is the sun, which the Irish worshipped, the description of their temples and the mention of their harps, these are all so many concurring circumstances, which seem more than probable that this could be no other than Ireland: And if the learned of this island, who were then the ancient Druids of it, could as with telescopes shew the moon nearer, it may be supposed that they had made a greater progress in those sciences than is generally imagined. It is also very remarkable that they have a tradition at Lismore, where was anciently a celebrated school, of several Greeks having studied there in former times. It is moreover to be observed, that the nineteen years converse with APOLLO which is the cycle of the sun, the notion of the moon’s opacity and of its mountains, rocks &c. shew them to have been no bad astronomers.” It must not be concealed however, that this passage from DIODORUS is quoted also by MR. ROWLAND in his history of Anglesea, and applied by him to that island: and yet that island is so much inferior to Sicily in extent, as that it does not seem probable to be meant in it; and the passage is applied undoubtedly with greater reason to Ireland, of which it appears to be an exact description.

Besides the school of Lismore there were anciently many others, of that sort which are properly called Academies; in which all kinds of sciences as well as languages were taught; and to which the British, Saxons, and Gauls, as well as Irish, resorted for their learning. There is no account of any so early as that of Lismore; and next to that the most ancient and eminent was at Ardmagh where S. PATRICK built a city, and where the chief study of learning was afterwards held; and the names of some that were readers there in the time of the Danes, we are told by Sir J. WARE, are yet extant, as relicks of its ancient splendor. The academy at Clonard was founded by FINAN, who flourished in the year five hundred and thirty, about an hundred years after the introduction of Christianity: and we may form some idea of the state of it from the vast concourse of foreigners that resorted to it. Our venerable BEDE acknowledges (*b*), “that many of the English nation of all ranks and denominations in the time of Bishop FINAN, leaving their own native country retired to Ireland, that they might devote themselves in a more effectual manner, either to the reading and studying divinity, or to a more strict and continent life. Those of a more active genius frequented the schools, receiving instructions with pleasure, and pursuing the knowledge of divinity with unwearied diligence. All these the Irish readily and chearfully entertained, maintaining them at free cost, procuring for them such books as were necessary to the prosecution of their studies, and defraying the expences of their education.” They not only taught at home, but they sent their missionaries into the continent, set up schools in those parts, and laid the foundation of the most flourishing universities in Europe. In short Ireland was the prime seat of learning to all Christendom, and there our ALFRED, and other princes had their education. But the incursion of the Danes in the eighth century, and the series of war between them and the Irish for almost three hundred years, put an end to the cultivation of arts and sciences. It is not therefore till more modern times, in the year thirteen hundred and thirteen, that we hear of any more academies or Schools, when the Archbishop of Dublin applied to the Pope for a bull for founding an University of scholars at Dub-

(*b*) History Eccles. lib. iii. c. 27.

lin, which on his death in the same year was renewed and founded by his successor ; the statutes of which are given us by Sir J. WARE. But the University, for want of sufficient maintenance, by degrees came to nothing. The same fate, and for the same reason, had another erected at Tredagh, now called Drogheda, by authority of Parliament in the year thirteen hundred and sixty five, and endowed with the privileges enjoyed at Oxford. The honour of the University of Dublin was at length restored by Queen ELIZABETH, of which I have given a sufficient account already.

Religion.

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As the Britons and Hibernians had the same original, so in their religion it is probable they were not very different. But as the Druids, who had almost the sole management of all public affairs in these islands, never committed any of their polity to writing, at least in legible characters, there is very little handed down concerning the religion of these ancient people. This much however seems to be pretty clear, that it had a near resemblance, if it was not the very same, with the principles and the worship of the Gauls—their progenitors, deduced from those of the old Celtæ. What this original Celtic religion was, we learn not only from the Irish history, but from the concurrent testimony of foreign authors also, that it was the same with that of the old patriarchs. They worshipped one supreme being, not in temples but in groves ; which being open at the top and sides, were in their opinion more acceptable to the divine and unconfined being whom they adored. They believed a future state of rewards and punishments suitable to their behaviour here : they offered victims to the Deity, and celebrated some festivals in honour of him ; and in most things observed a great simplicity in their religious rites. This is a short and concise system, which it is probable the old Celtæ brought with them from Gaul into Britain, and which came thence with the first inhabitants into Ireland ; 'till the fair face of religion became clouded and obscured, as well as in other nations, by idolatry and impious rites.

There are many remains of ancient altars still to be seen in many parts of the island ; which from the rude unhewn stones with which they were built, and which from the manner in which they are placed, afford an al-

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most certain conjecture that they were intended for sacrifice ; agreeable to the antediluvian practices founded upon ABEL's offering the firstlings of his flock. There is a passage in the book of Exodus which countenances this conjecture. " If thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone ; for, if thou lift thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." This is probably a repetition of the old original law, which the Patriarchs no doubt obeyed, and which the nations descended from them very naturally followed in imitation of their example. These altars therefore, upon this supposition, are too great a mark of the origin and antiquity of the first inhabitants of this country to be contradicted ; notwithstanding the prevailing humour of calling it in question here in England. But to these may be added many columns or pillar stones, which are generally at no great distance from the altars, usually from six to nine feet high, and about ten feet in circumference ; which are supposed, like those mentioned in Scripture, to have been erected either as memorials or records to perpetuate the remembrance of some great transaction, or as places of private worship. Of the first sort are the pillars of RACHAEL and ABSALOM, and of the latter is JACOB's pillar. There are likewise heaps of coped stones dispersed in several parts ; some of them small and others extremely large, which seem to have been applied to different uses. The former are supposed to have been originally the graves of men ; according to a custom which prevailed among the Israelites mentioned in the book of JOSHUA. The larger sort are thought to have been either the burial places of some great commanders, like the funeral pile of HECTOR, or — in my opinion more truly from the pillars near them — as the monuments of ancient sacrifices, the positive rites of religion and worship in the early times ; which were principally instituted for the establishment of covenants and federal sanctions both public and private, like that between LABAN and JACOB mentioned in holy writ.

There is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that the old Celtæ, who came into Britain in a very early age after the dispersion of mankind and thence into Ireland, might have brought with them an imitation of this primitive pattern, as well as the language, and have derived the custom of heaping stones from one and the same original ; the patriarchal practise founded

founded on the statutes of the sons of NOAH. It must be observed that MR. ROWLAND [c] has judged it to be unreasonable, to suppose that the larger heaps or carneadds, with their standing pillars that they have generally near them, are any other than the remaining marks and evidences of that religious ceremony and custom recorded by MOSES in the case of LABAN and JACOB, and practised also in other countries. The reader shall hear how he establishes this opinion. “In the first place, the adjustment of personal and provincial rights and properties, by so sacred and binding an establishment as this seems to have been, was as necessary, and consequently as likely, to have been conveyed into and made use of among these communities and settlements, as in those countries where MOSES has so particularly described it. In the next place, why should these heaps and carneadds agree so exactly in their make and position with the description that MOSES gives of the others in the land of Haran? And how should the columns and pillar stones be placed generally near their heaps, as those described by MOSES were, if both the customs did not proceed from one and the same original, the patriarchal practise?”

But this patriarchal way of worship, the old historians of Ireland inform us, lasted no longer there than 'till the hundredth year after the arrival of the Spanish colony, when, in conformity to the customs of other nations, idolatry was introduced; in which they probably made use of the same altars for their bloody expiatory sacrifices. In these days of heathenism they worshiped BELUS or BEL, as the ancient Britons also did, as God of the sun or fire; as well as the Gods of mountains and rivers. They worshipped the God BEL by consecrated fires on every first day of their summer; and in conformity to this custom, their first day of May is at this time called “Bel-tinne”, or the fire of BEL. Though we are told by CAESAR and other writers, that the Deities of the Gauls and Britons were much the same, which were likewise those of the Irish, and that the Druids had the direction of all religious con-

[c] History of the isle of Anglesea, p. 51.

cerns among the former, yet it appears from some of the old Irish records, that their Druids had not so much power and authority as the others in Gaul and Britain; that they were less scrupulous in the ancient rules of their profession; and that they committed many of their mysteries and observations to writing: but then it was in obscure characters unknown to the vulgar, which was much the same as trusting them to tradition among themselves. Of the works of these Druids, supposed by S. PATRICK to be dedicated to the service of idolatry, no fewer than an hundred and eighty tracts, we are told, were at his instance committed to the flames. This was the first destruction of the remains and monuments of learning in that unfortunate island, owing equally to zeal and ignorance.

There is a passage in the “Enquiry into the Life of HOMER” which confirms this account of the Irish Druids. The polite and ingenious author of that work, speaking of the ancient kingdoms of Assyria, Egypt, and Phenicia, tells us, that a great part of the administration having been brought into the hands of the sacred order, they took all possible methods to keep up their authority, and aimed at nothing more than the raising their reputation for wisdom and knowledge. This rendered them at first envious of their discoveries, and then at pains to find out methods how to transmit them to their descendents without imparting them to the vulgar. Here then was the origin of allegory and fable;—nor did they stop at this, but as a second wrapper, and a remedy against the growing knowledge of the country, they invented or borrowed a new character for writing these allegories, which they called HOLY LETTERS, because they must be known by none but the priests, nor used by them but in divine matters.—It is true there was as yet no separation of wisdom: the philosopher and the divine, the legislator and the poet were all united in the same person; and silence and superstition made a necessary part of their institutions [d].” It hath already been observed, that the Celtiberi who came into Ireland from Spain, had an

[d] Enquiry into the life of Homer, p. 83, 84,

early commerce with the Phenicians, whose Druids Dr. BLACKWELL speaks of in this passage; and from them this custom and this art of writing—practised by the Druids neither of Gaul nor Britain—might be derived. That this custom was in Ireland is further confirmed by WARE, who says that, besides the vulgar character, the ancient Irish used divers occult forms and arts of writing, which they called OGAM, wherein they writ their several concerns; of which character he found very much in an ancient parchment book which he had.”

The name of their Ecclesiasticks was derived from the Celtic word “Deru,” which signifies an oak; either because their dwellings and temples were in groves of those trees, or because the misleto, which grows upon the oak, was looked upon among them as a very sacred thing, and the greatest blessing the Gods could give them. The account which we have from CAESAR [e], of their office, order, learning, and jurisdiction, shews an exact conformity between the Celtic and Phenician Druids above-mentioned. He tells us “that they have a superintendent or head Druid to whom they are all subject, and upon whose decease the most worthy succeeds him; but if there happened to be several candidates, the election is decided by a majority of votes, and sometimes by the sword. Once a year they have a general rendezvous at a consecrated place set apart for that purpose, which lies in the midst of Gaul; whither all such flock as have any controversies to decide, and submit to their decrees. This discipline, it is thought, was first instituted in Britain, and from thence transferred to Gaul; because those who desire to be perfect masters of their art took a voyage thither to learn it.” But with all due submission to so great an authority, it seems to me very absurd to suppose, that as the Britons, by his own and by all other accounts, were originally inhabitants of Gaul, they should be more perfect in their notions and principles of religion than the people from whom they sprung. It appears more probable that the Britons had learned this system from their descendents the Irish, communicated to them by their new countrymen the Spaniards; who, according to most historians, were

[e] Comment, lib. vi. cap. 8.

possessed of all the virtues of the ancient Celtic nation, and among whom that religion particularly prevailed.

The Druids were not only at the head of religion, to whom belonged the care of their public and private sacrifices and the interpretation of their mysteries, but they were held in such great veneration among the people, that they had also the arbitration of all their differences. They not only presided at their religious rites, but no public transaction passed without their approbation, nor was the greatest malefactor put to death without their consent. Whatever offence was committed among the people, whether it related to life or property or possession, these were the judges that were to determine: and whosoever refused to submit to their determination, whether he was lord or vassal, they excluded from partaking of their public worship. They were not only the most noble and considerable people of their country, to whose care was committed the education of their youth and the king's and prince's children, but as it was a notion prevalent in those times that they had a communication with the Gods by way of divination, soothsaying, and the magic art, so the ancients esteemed them as magicians and enchanters, of which there are many instances in the Irish history. To them also was ascribed the knowledge of the stars, of nature, and philosophy; which entitled them to the profession of astronomers, physicians, and legislators. In short they were held in such esteem in those dark and simple ages, and their authority was so great, that it frequently exceeded that of their Sovereigns themselves. A late Irish writer, already mentioned, hath told us that this prostitution of their liberties never prevailed to so high a degree in Ireland as in other Celtic countries; which he attributes to the constant use of letters among the people, and to the free and happy genius of the laity for examining into the reason of things. It is certain that there were some dawnings of a noble spirit of liberty and of sound philosophy there, before the introduction of Christianity; which exerted itself in opposition to their absurd and corrupt system of idolatry and polytheism. But what the particular religion of this country was, more than paganism in the worship of BEL and the Gods of mountains and rivers, there are no remains which enable us to discover.

Tho' the whole island was not converted to christianity till about the year four hundred and thirty by S. PATRIC, yet it is a great error to suppose, as many do, that there were no body of Christians here before that period. This is not however a proper place for the discussion of that point, and the reader must be referred for it to the history. It will be sufficient to observe here, that tho' the Christian religion had got footing in this island in some particular places, yet the generality of the people continued under paganism, 'till S. PATRIC and his coadjutors by their zeal and diligence converted all the Irish. So rapid a progress was hardly ever known in any other land. The country was filled with bishops, priests, and religious houses : the monks dispersed themselves into every corner ; and no place was more celebrated for the sanctity and learning of its several monastic orders. The retreats which they pitched upon, they cleared and cultivated with their own hands ; they fasted and prayed without intermission, and preached more by their example than their precept. Hence the name of the " Sacred Island," or the Island of Saints, was given to it. There were no less than three hundred and sixty monasteries, abbeys, and other religious houses, built and founded in it ; besides many others that were erected in the infancy of their Christianity, and afterwards converted into parish churches.

The religion of those times, from the reception of the gospel 'till the reformation, was, according to Archbishop USHER, " in substance the very same with that which now is maintained therein." It must be observed that he speaks here of the fundamental points of doctrine that are in controversy between us and the church of Rome at this day, and not of matters of inferior note ; much less of ceremonies and such other things as appertain to the discipline of the church. In these, I believe, Ireland conformed generally to the customs of Rome ; though without that submission to his holiness, 'till the English conquest, which it afterwards acquiesced in. They searched the Scriptures, and from thence drew the rule of their faith and practice : they were strangers to purgatory and prayers for the dead ; and had no one general form of divine service : they were ignorant of the mass, and the wonderful doctrine of transubstantiation, confession, penance, and the celibacy of the clergy :
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their monks were religious indeed, and not merely in name ; far from the pride and idleness and hypocrisy of their successors, they got their living by the labour of their hands. Nay Pope ADRIAN himself, in the instrument of authority which he gave HENRY the Second, to invade and conquer Ireland, alledges, as one of the motives, that he might enlarge the borders of the church ; which plainly shews that it was not then in conformity to the See of Rome. Therefore whatever changes for the better this country might undergo by the English conquest, the change in religion was not one of them ; and Ireland became subject to the papal tyranny and usurpation for several ages, 'till the reformation in England set it free.

Since that time, like England too, it has been divided into Protestants and Papists, though with much less success in renouncing the errors of popery. For the latter have hitherto had so much the ascendant with regard to numbers, that in some counties there are ten or twelve Papists to one Protestant ; and in the extent of many large parishes scarce ten of the latter are to be found. But taking the island in general, the number of Protestants hath encreased so much of late years, that a proportion of three to eight is at this day computed to be the numerical ballance between Protestants and Papists in that kingdom. The Papists indeed for the most part are of the lowest rank, yet Papists they are still, under the unbounded direction and government of their priests, who are in general very deficient in learning except in Latin ; in which they read a great deal of the lives of their saints, and the fabulous stories of their country. Those among them who are promoted to titular bishopricks are chiefly men of good Irish families, but the inferior clergy are from the lowest of the people. For it is no uncommon thing — as I am informed — to meet with many boys on the road, under the title of poor scholars, begging for money to buy books ; who after getting a very little learning are ordained, and then sent to study their course of philosophy abroad. Their preaching is rather to terrify their people with dreadful stories, than to persuade them by reason or the Scriptures. These are a race of men, who tho' dead in law, yet live, and will live

in Ireland as long as their religion lives there; and who, instead of being a clog and incumbrance to the state as they now are, might by some prudent regulations be made of advantage to it. The great sums which their people pay them, and pay them more punctually than they do their rents, considering the number of Priests, Friars, Monasteries, Bishops, and Archbishops, tend to impoverish their laity inconceivably: and if their titular Bishops and Archbishops were removed effectually out of the island, and their Priests were tolerated and paid by the government instead of receiving dues, oblations, or fees from the poor papists, on condition that each of them kept one or two looms at work constantly in their houses, they could have no reason to complain of severities, and it might secure their affections and interests to the state.

The richer and better educated among the laity, are such catholicks as are of that rank in other countries; that is, they conform to the popular superstition, but believe, or at least conjecture, that things are not as they should be. But whatever may be the case with others, of these it may be truly said, that they are every day less violent in their opinions, and less bigotted than they used to be: and indeed they are generally addicted to the popish religion, not through the force of opinions and doctrines, so much as from long habit and custom and the prejudices of education. However living so much among Protestants, and conversing more with them than most Papists do in other countries, has introduced a latitude among them of thinking more charitably of our salvation, and more slightly of the authority and infallibility of the Pope, than any other body of catholicks whatever. The blood which they have lost, and forfeiture of their lands and liberties which has entailed upon them many miseries, have at last pretty well cured them of their political and religious madness: and indeed the greatest part of their gentry, who are distinguished for their fortune or understanding, have within these last threescore years renounced the errors of the church of Rome.

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The poor catholicks, who are extremely ignorant indeed, seem, in adhering to their religion, to obey their chief men and heads of families in their neighbourhood rather than their Maker. They treat an oath on a protestant bible as a trifle, and are upon that account become a proverb of reproach : but of all oaths they think themselves most at liberty to take a land oath, as they call it ; that is, to prove a deed which is forged for possession of estates, or releases for payment of rent. In ancient time, their manner of swearing in any debate before their Brehons, was by the head, hands, life, or health of their lord or prince ; which is a custom that seems to have been derived from the Egyptians, as we may conclude from JOSEPH'S swearing by the life of PHARAOH. This was in use also among the Christians of the East and West, and continued longer perhaps in Ireland than in other places. At this time, in general they look upon no oath as binding but on a crucifix, or something in the shape of a cross, especially if it is of iron ; the putting the fingers only across will sometimes answer the end. It might therefore be no bad expedient, in order to come at the truth from these people, if in their own, and in our courts of justice, after the oath had been administered in the usual form, and with much more solemnity than it is, they were also sworn upon a crucifix before they were permitted to give evidence. They have a great opinion of holy wells, rocks, and caves, which have been the cells or receptacles of reputed saints. They are in general very regardless of death ; and though not so much as in former times, yet still addicted greatly to superstition. They are extremely illiterate, but yet they are sensible of the hardships which their priests and popery bring upon them : for though they cannot see these things in speculation, yet they can feel ; and as their spiritual taxes are numerous, and in proportion to their little substance are very heavy, so they perceive how they are fleeced to support their spiritual fathers in a dominion over them.

Whatever low opinion we entertain in England of the understandings of these people—and a very erroneous opinion it is—it must be owned that they are more docile, and less obstinate and violent in their natural disposition.

sition, than either the Welch or Scotch; and had the same care and application been used to convert the Irish, which we must be sensible took place in Wales and Scotland, their religious differences in Ireland would have been long since extinguished; the wars and massacres and banishments which flowed from them would have been prevented; and the many millions which it hath cost England for their reduction would have been saved. But that opportunity and some others since have been lost, not only to the prejudice of the protestant religion, but to the diminution of the greatness and the strength of Ireland, and in its consequence of Britain. The business now of the legislature is to make the best use they can of the means that are in their power to remedy this evil; and 'till it can be remedied—which will require time and prudence, as well as zeal—not to turn the discouragements which the laws have laid the Papists under, against the public interest; and not to make them, as they are now, less useful subjects than they might be. For instance: Whereas permanency of tenure, stable property, and even durable security in land or money are at present prohibited the Irish Papists by law, which obliges them to keep their lands waste instead of improving them, (in order to prevent, as much as possible, any temptation to leases in reversion, which Protestants only can take) would it not be more for the public interest, to allow all those who would take an oath of allegiance to the government, the same privileges which are allowed to Papists in Protestant governments abroad; the same in short which King WILLIAM left them, so much to his own glory, and so much to the peace and happiness of this country? By giving them an interest in lands, they would not only be led from that lazy depopulating Tartar life of pasturage, which would be evidently for the public interest, but it would also be a security to government, in their having something to lose by a change of state; and if we permitted them to have a loan in the hands of government, they would have something to lose by a change of constitution. The people of Ireland therefore have acted as impolitically with regard to the Papists, as the people of England have done with regard to Them: they have both pursued the business of restraint, because they

they had power and resentment on their side, beyond its proper limits, to their own apparent disadvantage. It is high time that both should see their error, and correct it.

The religion which has continued to be established among the Irish from the accession of Queen ELIZABETH, in point of doctrine, discipline, and worship, is exactly the same as the Church of England; which in all those respects may be said without any partiality, to be the best and purest religion established in the world. Here also as in England, through weakness of mind or prejudice of education, are dissenters of all denominations; and their number is not inconsiderable. But it would be well for the safety and prosperity of this island, if the whole body of Protestants in the several counties would unite with zeal and firmness in the support and encrease of the Protestant working schools that have been erected; in order to extirpate the Popish principles from the minds of every rising generation, and to inure them to labour and honest industry. For though favour and indulgence should be allowed to Papists, upon the principles of policy as well as religion, yet upon the same principles it will appear, that the interest of Protestants should never be out of sight. The institution of these schools by the Royal Charter, will be far more productive of national morality, and are more consistent with the meek and benevolent temper of Christianity, than restrictive penal statutes. Besides, they will abolish gradually in their natural course, the great number of Popish holidays, on which some hundred thousand working hands are kept idle, and the labour and profit of them lost to the publick stock for a considerable part of the year, the very harvest not excepted. This damage, little as it is observed, upon a fair calculation appears an astonishing drawback from the wealth and strength of the nation; which, as it grows chiefly from labour, so it must languish with the decrease of it.

The government of Ireland was at first divided, after the manner of the ancient Gauls, into several petty states, with a head or king elected over each of them; and sometimes they had the chief command over the whole by turns. This was a kind of government which they derived

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rived probably from the patriarchs, and was extremely consistent with the essence and genius of true liberty. For when the various necessities of society required a subordination, together with some stated maxims to go by, in order to avoid the promiscuous intercourse and confusion in a state of nature, the people elected the most wise and able to conduct them in times of war, and in more auspicious seasons to protect and govern them. But these several independent states were continually at variance with each other upon many different accounts, as we shall see in the course of their history; and which is well enough attested, when stripped of all its fable, to ascertain that fact. The people were divided into four ranks or classes: the first consisted of their great men or nobles, out of which they chose their kings; the second class contained their druids, bards, and men of letters; in the third were the tradesmen or common people; and from all these, the different orders of the soldiery, which composed the fourth class, were taken. We are authorized by LIVY, and by historians much more ancient, to give the title of Kings to such heads or chiefs, though they were probably no other than such as the Indian Kings, or Lords of manors in England; as Kings of Ophaly, Kings of Limerick, Kings of Cork &c. and the chief monarch himself, to whom these were in a manner subject, had no other land at first than he got possession of. Thus the bounds of their territories were every day altered by force; and every principality was diminished or enlarged, according to the power and fortune of him that held it. But after the establishment of the Milesian race, the chief in abilities and martial skill of the Royal family was elected to govern the whole nation, with the aid and concurrence of the provincial Kings: however, except in times of war, their power was very limited; and reverence to the throne was obtained rather through submission to superior power and abilities, than from the terrors or the pomp of magistracy.

There were particular solemn and significant rites at the inauguration of every King in all the provinces of Ireland. The several estates of the country met together at the top of a hill; and the assembly being full, one of the chief men rose up, and standing in the midst with a stait

white wand without any knots in his hand, he advanced to the new elected king and addressed him in this manner : " Receive the auspicious ensign of your dignity, and remember to imitate in your life and government the whiteness, straightness, and unknottiness of this rod ; to the end that no evil tongue may asperse the candor of your actions with blackness, no corruption pervert your justice, nor any ties of friendship make it partial. Take therefore upon you in a lucky hour the government of this people, and exercise the power given you hereby with all freedom and security". These words being spoken, he delivered the rod into the king's hand, and the solemnity was at an end. It may be concluded, I think, with HARRIS, that if these petty kings of provinces were initiated into their respective governments by such ceremonies as these, then the supreme Monarch of Ireland must probably have been inaugurated by more august solemnities ; but whether by unction, or coronation, no monuments remain, more than their constantly wearing a crown in the field of battle, to give us any light. These provincial governments were regulated by their own local ordinances ; and the Sovereign, after paying his stipulated tribute to the monarch of Ireland, was scarcely subservient to his authority on any other occasion. He was accountable indeed for the chief part of his conduct to his own constituents ; who always reserved to themselves the power of choosing or deposing their provincial kings. They were obliged however to elect them out of the royal line, and to elect none but such as were of mature age.

The revenue of the monarch was divided into three branches : the first consisted in certain things which the princes or states supplied them with for the support of their household ; such as corn, hay, and cattle, which were usually paid in kind : the second was the produce of the demesne lands of the crown annexed to it for public uses : and the third branch consisted in taxes laid on the people on pressing occasions by the assemblies. Every provincial Sovereign was not only himself a king, but he had as many kings under him as there were septs or heads of families of distinction or estate ; there being no other titles of honour among them : And these administered justice to all persons

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belonging to their tribe or district by a privilege that was hereditary ; for which purpose they had each of them their Brehon or lawyer retained in their families, like the stewards of our leet and baron courts. Thus the regal, the noble, and the popular orders, had their respective attributes and limitations of power and authority : the two latter chose their own chiefs and deputies, and these last a King out of the royal Milesian family, and no other : and to prevent the fatal effects of a controverted election, the assembly of Teamer, which I shall presently give an account of, chose a “ Roydamna ” to fill the throne immediately upon the demise or abdication of the reigning prince.

But although they had the outlines of a good constitution in that country, yet it seems as though the prime political powers were never sufficiently ascertained. The election of a Roydamna was no doubt a wise institution ; but then in fact this king elect was generally the creature of a faction, and but seldom approved of by the reigning monarch, whose sanction should have been necessary to the election of a Roydamna. So many monarchs could not have fallen by the civil commotions of their successors, as the history will give an account of, if that was not the case. The factions of the Roydamna's, and the too great power of the provincial Sovereigns, rendered their monarchs too weak for the purposes of good government : and when there were no contests of this kind, it was rather perhaps owing to an happy concurrence of incidents, than to the soundness of the constitution. The form of their government was monarchical from the beginning, but at all times under the restraint of popular councils. It was in truth so much under that restraint, that it was too limited and circumscribed to answer the end of such a form. This induced some of their monarchs to remedy this evil, by tempering one kind of power in such a manner with another that the one might not degenerate into tyranny, nor the other run into the extremes of a democracy.

To this end were established three great councils of the nation, held in three different places : the first was a triennial parliament of all the

the estates assembled at the principal royal seat of Teamor — now corruptly called Tara — in the county of Meath, about that time of the year which is now the middle of October ; during which it was death without hopes of mercy, or in the power of the monarch himself to pardon, for any person to wound, assault, or draw upon another attending there, or to be convicted of stealth or robbery. This assembly, which may be called the supreme council of the nation, and which was instituted about six hundred years before the Christian æra, was held for making laws, for reforming abuses, revising and correcting their antiquities, annals, and genealogies ; and either for restoring, or preserving peace and amity with each other, by a solemn festival for seven days together. All the histories and antiquarians speak of this assembly in terms of the utmost respect, and describe the manner of their meeting and feasting in it with great exactness ; which the reader will find in its proper place. The persons who are said to compose it, were the princes, the nobility, the druids, the historians, and the men of learning of all professions, either of physic, law, philosophy, musick, or mathematicks. It appears therefore that though the government was monarchical, yet it was not only elective, but also in some sort aristocratical ; as no laws were made without the consent of this assembly : And tho' their monarchs had the appointment of all the officers civil and military, and had the power to pardon malefactors, yet the militia were in the hands of the general assembly at Teamor ; and the offences committed against private persons at that assembly were exempt from the royal prerogative of being pardoned.

In the other two councils held at Eamania and Cruachain, the subjects principally debated by the members were those of a national police, and related to the tradesmen, artificers, and mechanicks of all sorts ; especially masons, carpenters, and smiths, and others essential to the necessities of life ; of which a great number were summoned to attend each assembly. Out of this number, the council, which consisted of the nobility, gentry, and men of learning, elected sixty, who were judged to be most eminent in their occupations ; to whom they gave authority

and jurisdiction over all the other tradesmen and artificers throughout the nation, in order to reform any abuses which had been introduced into their several trades, and to suspend those who had been guilty from exercising them again. By this regulation, no tradesman or mechanick could set up or continue an occupation without their licence ; and all of them were subject to an examination of their skill and integrity by these authorised directors.

The government of this island since it came into the hands of the English, hath consisted of a deputy or Lord Lieutenant under the king of Great Britain, and commissioned by him ; and in the absence of the chief governor, usually of the High chancellor, and one or two more, called Lords Justices. The appointments of the Lord Lieutenant have for many years been established at twelve thousand pounds a year : but the present House of Commons thinking this allowance inadequate to the dignity of that high office, and being sollicitous to support his Majesty's government with becoming grandeur and magnificence, addressed him the last session to encrease it to sixteen thousand : “ at the same time expressing the satisfaction which they felt at the pleasing hope, that this augmentation should take place, during the administration of a chief governor, whose many great and amiable qualities, whose wise and happy administration in the government of this kingdom, have universally endeared him to the people of Ireland”. As becoming as these sentiments are of the liberal spirit and magnanimity of an Irish House of commons, it is hard to say which does the greatest honour to the Earl of HALIFAX, this unanimous resolution in favour of his person and administration, or the emulation of sentiment in his generous refusal of this lucrative advantage during his own government ; “ as he could not submit without pain, that the establishment already burdened at his recommendation, should be still further charged for his own particular profit”. Much more might have been added in a proper place, but less could not be said even in this ; where I am obliged to mention a transaction between the Parliament and the Lord Lieutenant, which, to the immortal honour of both, so remarkably distinguishes the present period of their history.

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Though Lord HALIFAX made “a sacrifice of his private interests to his private feelings”, yet there is no doubt but that the augmentation will be allowed to all future governors ; and indeed it seems just and necessary. For the authority of a Lord Lieutenant resembles that of a Vice-roy ; having a power from his Sovereign to fill up all offices of magistracy and trust, except very few, and to pardon all other crimes but high treason ; and even murder, which is high treason there, is not excepted : in short in his authority, jurisdiction, train, splendor, and provision, he comes nearer perhaps to the majesty of a King than any vice-roy in Christendome. There are assistant to him the council, the great officers of the crown, and others of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons ; much in the same manner as the Privy council is formed in England ; and they are nominated by the King, at the recommendation, it may be supposed, of the Lord Lieutenant. Upon his arrival at Dublin to take upon him the government, the council being assembled at the Castle in the great council chamber, and with the Lords Justices seated and covered, the letters patent appointing him are publicly read, the Lord Lieutenant standing behind the chair of the Lords Justices uncovered : when this is finished, he takes a solemn oath in a particular form administered to him by the Lord Chancellor or the first in the council present, during which they all stand up ; and the sword, which is to be borne before him, being delivered to him as soon as he is sworn, he is conducted covered to a chair of state, the council sitting down again in their places covered also as before ; and the nobility and gentry who are not of the council, as well as the other spectators, then withdraw. His commission, which is during the King’s pleasure, expires usually in three or four years, and sometimes sooner ; and he is seldom resident above six months in two years, the Parliament being summoned only every other winter : the Lords Justices administer the government in his absence, and are each of them allowed an hundred pounds a month for their trouble, by the Lord Lieutenant out of his salary.

In ancient time, or till the reign of JAMES the First, even perhaps till the settlement succeeding the restoration, before which it can scarcely
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be said in strictness to be brought under due subjection to the crown of England, it seems necessary at the first view, that this great supreme officer should have been an Englishman. But since that time, and especially in the present age, when the case is so much altered with regard to Ireland, governed by English laws, guarded by an English fleet and army, many Popish families of distinction being turned protestants, and when the greatest property of the lands and cities are in the hands of the English, it has been thought reasonable by many people, that Ireland should now be governed by its own members, or by those who are peculiarly interested in its prosperity. As reasonable however as it may appear to Us at this distance, yet a short acquaintance with the people and the state of Ireland, would convince others, I presume, as it did me, that a Lord Lieutenat of birth and property in that kingdom, by views of self interest, alliances, and connexions, would probably split it into factions and cabals and destroy the public peace ; nor would it be a measure desired by the men of sense amongst the Irish themselves.

But in order to preserve the impartiality which I profess, it must on the other hand be said, that it is a great detriment to that nation, that the whole appointment of the Lord Lieutenant and his officers is not expended amongst them, and by far the greatest part of it sent to England. To this may be added the inconvenience of appointing three Lords Justices of that country, during the absence of the Lord Lieutenant, instead of one. For having each of them their separate interests, alliances, and dispositions, the administration of government must be frequently interrupted ; and, if it is not discordant, yet can never be uniform. The ease of the suitors to the state for the dispatch of public business, seems another consideration why the supreme authority that directs it should be in the hands of one : and I believe it will be told posterity with pleasure, how happily for the people of Ireland, the Marquis of KILDARE when he was sole Lord Justice, through the ill health of the other two, administered the government of that kingdom in the year 1756. But what I have mentioned above is not the only detriment which is sustained, by the Lord Lieutenants not residing there

there the whole time of their commission, and by sending over new governors every three or four years, unacquainted with the various humours and interests of the people, rather fearing perhaps than designing the prosperity of its trade, from a foolish prepossession of its disadvantage to the trade and wealth of England ; and therefore managing the affairs under their government as may most consist with their interest and credit here. But the greatest detriment of all seems to arise from that emulation in the heart of man, which makes them unwilling to promote or second the laudable undertakings which any of their predecessors have set on foot ; from their not residing the whole time of their government, in order to acquire a thorough knowledge of the state and interests of the country ; and from their not continuing long enough in their posts to project and finish any great designs in their own time. Indeed if the Lord Lieutenants, and other ministers of state who are sent from England, would purchase, plant, and settle themselves in Ireland, it would be the best expedient that could be devised to promote its grandeur, and to improve and cultivate the country : and in truth most of the noble and great families in it, owe their original to the civil or military employments of their ancestors in that kingdom. But many of these employments being now enjoyed by those who are permitted to live entirely out of it, and none of the Lord Lieutenants and their officers residing here more than about six months in twenty four, the present method of government is not so beneficial to Ireland as it might be wished. Most of these sentiments are authorised by our own countryman SPENSER, who had been himself a Secretary of state in Ireland, and must therefore be allowed to have been a competent judge of these affairs. This however is not a place to enter upon any formal disquisitions of this nature : and yet in this age of improvement and reformation, they seemed too important to be quite omitted.

Beside the Lord Lieutenant, who calls and dissolves the Parliament at his Majesty's pleasure, which meets but once in two years, the Upper house consists of two and twenty spiritual, and at this time one hundred and thirty temporal Lords, exclusive of six popish ones ; many of whom reside always here, and are without a foot of land in that country, and some few
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—about twenty—are peers of the English realm. “ The nobility of Ireland have precedency on all solemn public occasions, except at coronations—which by parity of reason they ought to have over all the English peers of inferior rank; and this hath constantly been allowed them by all the kings of England from the earliest notices of record. In all acts of the legislature, the peers of Ireland have been named with this precedency: in all acts of Parliament, the British peers are ever ranked beneath the Irish of superior quality; and where an English Lord has a superior title in Ireland, he is always styled and ranked by the title of his Irish Honour. Upon the question of place and precedency of the Scotch and Irish nobility here, which was agitated in the time of JAMES the First, that monarch, after a consultation with the heralds, established the following rule: that in England all English earls should take place of all Scotch and Irish peers of that degree, but that both the latter should take place as last earls of England according to their creation; and that the same should be observed in like manner by all other degrees of nobility, either above or below an Earl: that in Scotland the Scotch peers were to take place first according to their degrees of nobility, then the English, and then the Irish; and likewise the same in Ireland, where the Irish were to take place first according to their degrees of nobility, then the English, and then the Scotch. This order was confirmed by his son CHARLES the First: nothing was done to set it aside in any succeeding reign, and the peers of Ireland have ever since been maintained in these rights by all the monarchs of England. It was the opinion of DYER and COMPTON, two eminent lawyers in the reign of Queen ELIZABETH, that an Irish peer by the laws of England is not triable here in capital cases: and ST. JOHN Solicitor General to CHARLES the First, says, in one of his arguments before the House of Lords, that Ireland being governed by the same laws, the peers there are triable only “ per pares” according to the laws of England. The noble author, to whom I am obliged for this paragraph [f], says, that the only rational way of accounting for a defect of precedents in favour of the Irish peerage, respecting coronations is this; that there can be no ancient precedents as to that point, because ’till the reign of King HENRY the Eighth, the Kings of England only bore the

[f] Earl of EGDMONT’s father. Question of Precedency of the Irish Peers, passim.

title of Lords of Ireland, which was erected into a kingdom by an Irish act of Parliament in that reign; and that in the same reign also, by the same authority, whosoever shall be King of England, is declared to be “*ipso facto*” King of Ireland without any further ceremony”.—It must be allowed that this is a rational way of accounting for a defect of precedents in favour of the Irish peers at coronations prior to the reign of that King, but it does by no means account for it at coronations since his time; and it is surprising that such an author, so accurate and judicious in all other parts of his performance, should account for it in that manner. Of the forty precedents which he hath brought to support the claim of the Irish peerage, thirty of them are since the reign of HENRY the eighth: and if there were so many of the Irish nobility present, on occasions of royal nuptials, christenings, funerals, and processions, it is very extraordinary there should be none at coronations; where, after it was declared a kingdom under one and the same crown, the peers of Ireland seem to have as much right of precedency as on all the other occasions, and to have no more right on these than on that of a coronation: But if there were none, after this great man hath failed, in my opinion, in accounting for it, I shall not presume to offer at it.

“It does not appear, says the same author, that there ever was any dispute upon the head of precedency between the English and Irish peers for above four hundred years, till about the latter end of the reign of Queen ELIZABETH; when a dispute arising in Ireland about place, between the Lord AUDLEY second baron in England, and the Irish barons who would not yield it to him, his Lordship applied to the Queen; whose answer was “that it was in her power to give him precedency, but it was not in her power to deprive others of it;” and accordingly created him Earl of Castlehaven in Ireland. Though the dignity of the Peerage hath been debased in many reigns, by being conferred upon mean and worthless people of both kingdoms, yet there will be found a great number of families in the Irish peerage, which, without disparagement to that of England, for antiquity of descent, are equal to those of England, or any other peers in Europe. They are also enobled in the same manner as we are in England: their privileges are derived under the same Magna Charta, and their honours from

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the same princes; their peerage is taken out under the same great seal, and in the very same terms of expression. As to the fortunes of the nobility to support their dignity, it is a misfortune to that kingdom, that the property of it is divided with a greater inequality than in any other nation that we know: so that notwithstanding the general poverty and distress which the body of the people undergo, and the restraints of commerce which prevent their making the most of their estates, yet many of the peers of Ireland are possessed of fortunes suited to the highest degree of quality, and several enjoy properties of great consideration here. Indeed to say the truth, the nobility of Ireland,—excepting four or five of Irish extraction, who themselves are very eminent—are wholly composed of families transplanted from England thither; many of which are either the chief or the younger branches of the greatest houses of Great Britain; such as long before their migration into that kingdom—where they were employed commonly for the service of the English crown and government—had enjoyed the highest offices of the English and Scottish states, and had frequent summons to their Parliaments.”

The House of Commons of Ireland consists of three hundred members, chosen out of the counties, cities, and boroughs in the same manner that they are in England: but there is this material difference in the constitution of it, that no qualification of estate is necessary for a seat in that House; and when a member is once elected, he is elected for the King's life or his own, unless the King should choose to dissolve the Parliament; which, since this custom took place, has been very rarely if ever done. If therefore a man has interest enough to get himself elected in any borough or county, either by his personal acquaintance, by recommendation, or by his money, it is not material whether he has a foot of land in the kingdom, or is worth a shilling more than his election cost him: and yet with all this temptation to venality, or to mean, indirect, and unworthy practices, he is secure of a seat in Parliament for his own life or the King's: Thus the last Parliament continued for three and thirty years. Indeed the struggle is generally so great — owing principally to that circumstance of duration, without doubt — that a man of a small fortune has but little chance of succeeding under a contest; unless he is powerfully supported, or is foolish enough to risk the whole of it at an election. The present Parliament intended to remedy these

these absurdities, and to bring the constitution of their House of commons to the same form with that of Great Britain. But to speak more truly, I should say that the PEOPLE intended it ; who being naturally fond of a frequent exertion of their power, and of the jollity, the cunning, and the money stirring at elections, obliged all the candidates for a seat in this Parliament, at every independent borough through the kingdom, to take an oath that if they were elected they would each of them vote for such an act. Accordingly in their first session, the heads of a bill were brought in, and passed the House for this purpose ; limiting the duration of Parliaments to seven years, and requiring the same estates which are required in England, as a qualification for a seat in the House of commons. These heads, according to the usual course of Parliamentary business in that kingdom, were with little or no alteration certified over to England in due form, by the Lord Lieutenant and the Irish council. But considering the violent, irregular, and anticonstitutional method, in which these heads of a bill were obtained, or rather forced from the House of commons, it is no wonder that the King and the English council should reject it.

There is indeed another material difference in the constitution of their Parliament from ours, and which makes the alterations just mentioned not so necessary nor important as they would otherwise be ; which is, that the Irish Parliament has little other privilege, as a legislative power, than putting a negative upon any law which comes to them from the King and council of England to be passed, unless it is the same which hath already passed in Ireland, or with such alterations only to which they have no objection. Though the privy council are not deemed an estate, or a necessary branch of the constitution, yet to say the truth, the Lord Lieutenant and this council have the chief, and almost the whole legislative power. For by POYNING'S law in the reign of HENRY the seventh, — which will be hereafter mentioned — and which made a great alteration in the constitution of that kingdom, there can be no Parliament held in Ireland, 'till the governor and privy council have informed the King of the causes of holding it, untill they have specified the bills that are intended to pass into laws in that session, and untill the King and his council in England have given

their approbation. By this means the power of framing acts to pass in Parliament in Ireland, was vested in the King and his two councils, and only a negative was left to the two Houses of Parliament ; which is the reverse of the British constitution. But as many events might happen during the time of Parliament necessary to be provided for, which yet might not be thought of at the time when it was summoned, therefore that part of the law which allowed of no acts to be passed which had not been specified before the Parliament was held, was afterwards repealed ; and the governor and council, during the sitting of the Parliament, might certify to the King under the great seal of Ireland, any other bills which they thought expedient should be passed into laws for the better government of the realm. The constitution still standing thus, it proves what I said, that the Lord Lieutenant and council have the chief legislative power. But this will appear still more clearly, when I have explained the whole process of an act of Parliament.

Though no bill can take its rise either in the House of Lords or Commons, as we have seen, yet when any matter is thought to be a proper subject for a law, it has been long indulged to both Houses, and with great reason surely, to propound it under the title of heads of a bill ; and if it passes that House in which it was moved, it is sent to the Lord Lieutenant and council, to be certified in due form under the great seal to England. Here it is again debated, altered, or rejected ; but if it is approved of for a law, the former title is dropped and it is moulded into the form of a bill, and in that form transmitted by the Lord Lieutenant and council to the King. In England it undergoes another deliberation by his Majesty and his council : and if it comes back at all, or comes back with any alterations, it is sent by the Lord Lieutenant to the House in which it took its rise, to receive or to reject it ; but not the least alteration can be made in it when it returns from England. If it has had no alterations there, or in their own council, or none but such as the House approve of where it first arose, it is passed by them, and sent to the other House with a desire that they would concur with them in it, and if it passes that House also, it then receives from the Lord Lieutenant the royal assent.

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This being the process of an act of Parliament in that kingdom, does it not appear evidently, as I said at first, that the chief governour and his council have the principal, if not almost the whole legislative power? Either House of Parliament has a negative upon the bills passed in the other; or when their own bills return to them mutilated by the Irish or English council in a manner they disapprove of; and it is almost all the power they have. But the Lord Lieutenant and council, when the heads of a bill are sent to them, can alter or suppress it; and the Lords or Commons who have framed them — except such as are of the council — know no more why the bill is altered or rejected, than the King himself who never heard of it. Thus the governour and his council, by blocking up the ways of approach, can prevent a communication, if they please, between the King and the other parts of the legislature; and the most salutary and essential laws may be denied them, without the knowledge or consent of the King himself. It must be owned that according to the present constitution of their government, which allows only the chief governour and council “to certify to the King the considerations and ordinances which they shall think good to be enacted in the Parliament”, the power abovementioned is strictly warranted by law; and it was a power, at the time when it was assumed, extremely proper, if not absolutely necessary, to the good government of that kingdom, so much then in the hands of the Irish chiefs: but as both Houses have been indulged with the privilege of framing heads of a bill, whether any such should be in the power of the governor and council totally to reject, is a question which I shall leave to other people to determine.

The legal and spiritual courts are constructed like those of England: in the court of equity, a Lord Chancellor, a Master or rather Keeper of the rolls having no judicial capacity, — and four Masters in chancery: in the King's bench, a Lord chief justice and two other judges: and in the Exchequer, a Lord chief Baron and two other Barons, with the Chancellor and Treasurer of the Exchequer: in the Common pleas, the same number, with a Lord chief justice, as in the King's Bench; and to these four courts may be added a court of Exchequer chamber consisting of the Lord Chancellor,

cellor, the Lord high treasurer, and vice-treasurers, assisted by the two Chief justices; a court of Delegates, a court of Admiralty, and a court Martial for the affairs of the army. There are four law terms the same as in England, and five circuits which the Judges go twice every year.

The Primate hath a prerogative, the other Archbishops their metropolitan, and every Bishop his consistory court peculiar to each diocese. The ecclesiastical government is by Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and Deans in cathedral churches; of which there are but two entire choirs in the kingdom, St. Patrick's and Christ-church, Dublin; or rather there is but one choir, as it hath been already mentioned, which serves for both those Cathedrals. All the other Deanries are sine-cures in villages, or benefices endowed with lands and tithes. The number of beneficed clergy is computed at about eight hundred; and near a third of the tithes are impropriate, and in the hands of laymen and ecclesiasticks. There is some little difference between the canons of that church and ours, and the discipline is not exactly similar. The Bishops visit their dioceses annually except every third year, when the Metropolitans visit all the dioceses in their respective provinces; and instead of options, if any preferments become vacant in the disposal of the Bishop of the diocese during such visitation, the Archbishops collate to them as of their own right for that turn. The Archdeacons, except at Dublin, Lismore, and two or three other places, have lost their jurisdiction; and there are Archdeaconries, absolute sinecures to the value of a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds a year. In a country where so much popery prevails, this is an irregularity in the church which surely deserves some amendment: and if it was formerly thought expedient to join two or three Bishopricks together in order to make a proper provision for the episcopal dignity, it seems as expedient in the present age, if we had the same zeal and spirit, to reduce such immense sinecures which seldom answer any valuable purposes to the church, and to distribute their income among the small livings in their neighbourhood. But there is another circumstance in the ecclesiastical constitution of Ireland yet worse than this, which is their pluralities. As much as I have contended upon other occasions [g] for the necessity of these in England, where the law hath restrained them to two benefices with cure, within

[g] Eccles. History vol. i. p. 473.

the distance of thirty miles from one another, yet the pluralities of Ireland, which are without stint and without measure, except in the Primate's breast, resemble those of Popish times here too much to admit of any excuse; and indeed they call aloud for a reformation. If a man has interest enough to procure four or five livings, he will probably find interest enough to obtain the Primate's consent; and his consent, with a faculty for each, will enable him to hold them all together, though they are situated at the different extremities of the kingdom. Well may the state of the Protestant religion there be very deplorable indeed, when pluralities so indefensible are avowed and authorized! But this is not a place to enlarge upon this subject.

As they had no written Laws in the first age in Ireland, but only custom and tradition, 'till about three hundred years before the Christian æra, so these were sometimes wrested and interpreted, as the traditions of religion were, in order to serve their own particular purposes. When any controversy was to be decided, the Brehon or judge used to sit on a heap of stones on the top of a hill without canopy or covering, and without clerks, registers, or records, or indeed without any formality of a Court of Justice; and this afterward came to be called the Brehon law. The greatest crimes were seldom punished otherwise than by fines, of which the Judge had the eleventh part for his fees; and theft or robbery, if committed upon any but their own Lords or principal followers, were not in the number of crimes. All such depredations were esteemed clear gains; and castles, if we may give that name to houses made of earth and wattles, were built upon isthmus's and other inaccessible places, to secure the plunder which they had got possession of from one another. Neither was it a matter of reproach; but rather of honour, to be distinguished by a dexterity at this sort of rapine. As odd as this may appear, it was not peculiar to these people in the first and rudest ages, nor even to the Northern nations only, for the learned Greeks were little better; as we may learn from the celebrated poems of HOMER, which contain little else but the plunders of cities, and unjust wars. But as there is a very wonderful mixture in human nature, so amidst all their violence and depredations, there were many virtues of temperance and generosity, and some kind of justice that went along with them.

Laws.

Differtat.
WARE.
SMITH.
HUTCHINS.
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NICHOLSON
TAYLOR.

In the beginning of the middle age, which was about three hundred years before the Christian æra, and which notwithstanding the partial and contradictory accounts of different authors, is the true date of the birth of their laws and learning, and of their forming themselves upon the plan of a wise and well-governed people; I say, at this time their lawgivers and philosophers, having observed the blunders and uncertainties in judicial cases, formed books of juris-prudence which they promulged for the use, as well of the judges, as of the people. But the contest of rival Princes soon after overturning the foundation of the constitution, law and learning were greatly affected, and the good which society reaped from both was defeated. Thus private property, instead of being protected, was invaded by law; and its outrages were borne about three hundred years before the people came to extremities. Popular fury at last succeeded, and, as always usual in such cases, knew no bounds. Their philosophers who had been the perverters of law and learning, were upon the point of banishment and destruction; but having a few men of probity and capacity of their number who were protected by the Monarch, the laws were again reduced to simple and intelligible rules, and every man of tolerable learning made a competent judge of his own case. These axioms were digested with so much knowledge and prudence, that they acquired the name of “Celestial judgments;” as tho’ they had received the approbation of heaven, and consequently were unalterable. It is very certain that the English after the conquest, as well as the Danes before it, destroyed all the books and writings they could meet with, in order to make the Irish forget as soon as possible their old laws and customs, and to compleat their subjection to the English yoke. But yet there are some remains of these books of laws; many of which were composed before, as well as after, the Christian æra. There were some in the possession of the late Duke of CHANDOIS — part of WARE’s collections — and there are several in the private and public libraries in Ireland. But as they are written in a sort of language peculiar to the lawyers and Brehons of those times, long since disused, they are at present, as I am informed and as it is natural to suppose, become utterly unintelligible both in the text and glossary. In the annals of the Four Masters, which is an authentic manuscript of great antiquity, many fragments are preserved of the

writings

writings of their most eminent men, monarchs as well as others : and Bishop NICHOLSON informs us, that one CONRY had in his possession the decisions or reports of three and thirty of the ancient Judges, the oldest whereof were given in the first century, and the latest in the tenth. To the question put by some here in England, by way of objection to these antiquities which still remain, “ why none of them were ever published”, I shall take this opportunity of giving an answer. The people of rank and fortune in Ireland are not only ignorant of the language and character in which these antiquities and histories are recorded, but they have always been brought up, through every succeeding generation, with our English prejudice, to look upon them with contempt ; or, what is still more absurd, to believe them to be the productions of later ages. What private person will therefore put himself to the expence of collecting, explaining, and publishing a set of manuscripts, the more unentertaining as they are the more authentic, which after all perhaps not an hundred people in the two kingdoms would purchase or peruse ?

When I said that we knew nothing of the laws of the ancient Irish, I did not mean to include their two great laws of inheritance, Tanistry and Gavelkind ; the former for the Lords of every sept or family, and the latter for common inferior lands and estates. The law of Tanistry, like ALEXANDER’s will, gave the inheritance to the strongest ; because it appears that seniority, if it was not accompanied with superior policy and experience, was very little or not at all regarded. In many cases therefore, if not in all, wherein the elder brother had not the greatest abilities and the best conduct, the younger was in fact the better gentleman ; for he succeeded to the chief command of his sept or family. This was a custom, though absurd and barbarous in itself, and attended very often with fatal consequences, which yet continued long after the conquest, even to the reign of JAMES the First. The rudeness, ignorance, and necessity of the times, undoubtedly gave rise to this law of Tanistry — and which PLUTARCH says was the law of the ancient Celtes—at the first establishment of the several colonies in the territories they got possession of ; and there was some shadow of reason for it : because when every petty Prince had a power of peace or war,

if a child or a woman should then possess a Chieftry or a Lordship, it would certainly be exposed to the rapine or incursions of its circumjacent neighbours. The same law extended to their Kings — as it hath been mentioned—choosing always the best soldier who had the greatest share of power ; without regard to the succession of a family, provided he was of the royal Milesian race. From this law, or custom, some historians have deduced the original hospitality of the Irish nation ; that by making a great appearance of splendour they might attract the admiration of the populace and encrease the number of their followers. But surely this is refining without occasion : for the Celtes or Scythians from whence they sprung were famous for this hospitality all over Europe ; and it is mentioned in their history by every author.

The law of Gavelkind for the partition of inferior common estates, obtained not only amongst the ancient Irish, but also amongst the Britons and Gauls, and indeed throughout Europe, if not all the world ; that the descendents might be enabled to acquire a livelihood, and settle in it without rapine and plunder, which was so much the general practise of the first inhabitants. Mr. SELDEN derives this partition from the practise of NOAH, and others from the first plantation of the land of Canaan. It is certain it was the principal tenure of these islands, as anciently as we have any traces of them. The original idea of this partition, from whencesoever derived, was doubtless common to the whole tribe before they separated and settled in different countries ; but then every colony made such alterations and amendments in it as best suited their circumstances, or as their judgment and fancy prompted. Thus by this law in England, the next of kin only as sons or brothers, excluding bastards, were admitted ; and for want of issue male, the daughters were allowed to inherit, and the widow to have her dower. This is the general nature of this tenure where it still remains ; though there are some exceptions in particular places. In Ireland, wives and daughters were excluded, though there were no issue male ; and not only bastards but the whole race or sept of males was admitted to share ; in order, it is said, to preserve the name and family and to defend the country. Upon every death, the possessions of the whole family

family were to be put together, and again divided among the survivors by the head or Caufinny, as he was called ; which divested each of them of his estate upon every new division. This seems to be a part of the ancient usage of Gavelkind peculiar to the Irish, unless the “ Land-shifting” in Germany, by which their tenure of partition is called, may resemble this in Ireland. The word “ Gavel”, is a Gaulic term for hold or tenure ; and the best antiquarians imagine, “ Kind” to be a Saxon addition, signifying nature, or genus, as in Mankind. It is evident that the custom of this partition was not derived from the word, because it would have had then the same title in every country ; but a term was given to the usage according to the different language of each.

When King JOHN overthrew the Brehon laws in Ireland, and settled those of the English, this tenure of partition received a great abatement, it is said, of its common force and usage. For it had been found by experience in this country, that military aids and settlements were greatly infringed and lessened by these fractions of estates, and that many genteel families were in a manner annihilated : “ and therefore it was ordained, that all Knights fees should come unto the eldest son by succession of heritage, whereby, succeeding his ancestors in his whole inheritance, he might be better enabled to maintain the wars against the King’s enemies ; and that the Socage fee should be partible among the male children to enable them to encrease in many families for the better furtherance in, and encrease of, husbandry [b].” It is very evident from the account of all ancient writers, that these two laws of inheritance in Ireland, “ Tanistry and Gavelkind,” were the parents of many murders and civil wars ; and by making their possessions so precarious, shuffling and changing them upon every new partition, they were the principal cause of barbarism and desolation, and the want of all improvement. For who would plant and inclose, or improve their lands, which a stranger, whom perhaps he did not know tho’ related to him, should possess after his death, and sometimes before it ? Nor was this the only disadvantage. The inhabitants, though poor, yet being born to land, would never learn any trade, nor turn mechanicks, because it degraded them from their gentility : and the Caufinny would refuse to admit a tradesman to his share of the

[b] Doddridge’s Treatise of Nobility, p. 119.

estate, since he had, as it were, abdicated his family, by condescending to a way of life that was beneath a gentleman. The manuscript which I have, speaking of this law of Gavelkind, says the reason of it was, that each country not being able out of its own revenue to maintain an army that might defend itself, it was thus divided into small freeholds, that so each possessor might be obliged to follow the chief Lord to war for the defence of the country upon their own charge, which was the service by which they held it; and the oftener a freehold was divided, the greater became the number of men in arms. To these laws of inheritance, the same manuscript adds another relating to murder, which I have not met with so described any where else. It says, that if any man committing murder was not immediately taken and executed in hot blood, it was customary for the Brehon to impose an eric or fine upon his nearest kindred; which was part of it paid to the relations of the person murdered, and the other part to the chief Lord: and the reason of this was, because, if any murderer could escape into another territory, he was protected; and it not being lawful to draw the blood of his kindred for him, it was thought fit to impose a fine upon them, as a satisfaction to the Lord for the loss of his vassal, and to the friends of the party murdered; that thereby the offenders might in some sort be punished in the persons, or at least the properties, of their dearest kindred.

Several specimens of the Brehon laws are still to be seen, as I have said, in their public and private libraries; from which, if they are intelligible, many of the ancient rites and customs of Ireland might be collected, which are now very obscure, if not altogether unknown. In the time of EDWARD the Third, it was enacted under the penalty of high treason, that none of the King's English subjects in this island should submit to a trial by the Brehon law: notwithstanding which, many of them were under a necessity of being concluded by the Irish laws and customs, 'till the whole country was settled upon an English bottom in the reign of JAMES the First. Indeed the Common law of England was submitted and sworn to by all the Irish potentates who put themselves under the protection of King HENRY the Second; and this is still as current and prevailing in the four courts at Dublin as at Westminster-Hall. A grant of the laws and customs of England were confirmed likewise by King JOHN, and his son HENRY the Third:

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but was confined to such of the natives as became liege subjects to our Kings, and such Englishmen as incorporated with them. Hence it came to pass, that, upon intermarriages between those that were without and within the English pale, frequent applications were made by the former, both men and women, for the benefit of these laws and the franchises belonging to them; and there are great numbers of royal grants of naturalization upon such petitions, which I have seen, that were extracted from their ancient records. In short, the Common law, except so much of it as hath been altered by Statute, is the same at this day in both kingdoms: and most of the public acts which by experience have been found beneficial to the whole people of England, have soon after been admitted and passed the Parliament of that kingdom. But though this is the case at present, yet it is to be observed, that 'till the time of JAMES the First, the law of England, as SPENSER says, "was never properly applied unto the Irish nation as by a purposed plot of government." Indeed in the reign of HENRY the Eighth, who first assumed the title of King of Ireland, all the Irish lords and principal men came in and acknowledged him for their sovereign; but being immediately left to themselves, and their own licentious manners, they soon forgot their obedience, and relapsed into all their former anarchy and confusion.

Whether there really were, or not, any gold mines in Ireland, as some historians, I have said, relate, yet it is not to be denied, that the use of money was very early there; even long before the arrival of the Norwegians or Danes, who are said by the English writers to have introduced it. The Irish word "monadh," as well as the other appellative words used with little variation in most of the ancient and modern languages to signify money, seem to have been derived from one and the same origine, the Hebrew "Monah or Mineh;" the name both of a weight and of a kind of money. Besides this, there are found in the Irish language many mercantile and other words derived from the Hebrew, which not only shew the great antiquity of that island—as it hath been already proved—but which denote also the early use of trade and of money in Ireland; into which it is probable it was introduced as soon as it was frequented by the Phenicians and other trading nations,

Coin.

SIMON.
WARE.
NICHOLS.
O FLAHER.
BERKLY.
Anonym.

nations, if not as soon as it was inhabited. A mint however is said to have been erected and silver money coined, about five hundred years after the arrival of the Milesian colony: and if silver was then coined, it may be presumed, I think, very reasonably that other money of copper or iron were in use before. There are many instances of their payments being made in gold and silver by the ounce in times later than this; but then these were generally of large sums, or for the utensils or ornaments of churches: and yet, according to KEATING, at the time when Christianity was first promulged in Ireland, mints were erected at Ardmagh and Cashell, and money coined for the service of the state. But from the difference in the respective weight of each of the pieces of coin that are now in being, and were current in those times, it might be necessary to pay and receive money in any considerable sum by the scale; which may be the reason why the old historians so often mention the payment of gold and silver by the ounce. But as all the coins of those ancient times which are now remaining in the cabinets of the curious, are only of a penny value; another reason occurs why payments should be made by weight and not by tale, which is that of dispatch and saving trouble.

Whether the monarchs of Ireland only, or each petty King in his province or territory, assumed the power of coining money does not appear, but the latter seems most probable: And whatever their coins were, there is no doubt but they were extremely rude and illegible, coarse in their make, and inelegant in their inscription; as appears from some which are still preserved. Though the Danes did not introduce money into this island, yet they greatly improved the coin of it: And it was as late as in the reign of King JOHN, that sterling money was brought into both kingdoms, which took its name from those Easterlings whom he called from Germany to assist in refining his coin. Other writers say, that the word was in use long before his time, and that it was introduced into England an hundred and fifty years before the Norman conquest. But be this as it may, King JOHN was the first monarch who ordered money to be coined in Ireland of the same weight and fineness with that in England; and this might be the foundation of the report above. This is not a place in which to give

an history of the Irish coins; which any one who has a curiosity that way may see accurately drawn out in Mr. SIMONS Essay on that subject. It is only necessary to say here, that the last regulation of the coin in Ireland, was in the year seventeen hundred and thirty seven; at which time the English guinea and half-guinea, the moidore and other Portugal pieces, the Spanish and French pistoles and the Louis d'ors, were made current in that kingdom at particular rates. But this scheme, though intended for the public good, was not well adapted, it hath been said, to the circumstances of Ireland; and the mischief of melting silver into plate, or sending it out of the island, is there grown to such a height, as well as here, that their only silver coin is much in the same state with ours; scarcely any thing but adulterated or old worn English shillings — which pass for thirteenpence — and some sixpenny pieces of a proportionable value not worth much above a groat. Upon the whole it seems necessary, that a mint should be allowed to Ireland; and the several species of copper, silver, and gold coins, made of such a standard weight and value, compared with the English, as are proper and convenient. It appears from the Essay abovementioned and from some historians, that from the year eight hundred and seventy two, down to EDWARD the Sixth in fifteen hundred and fifty, if not to QUEEN ELIZABETH, there were mints in Ireland and money coined for the public service. But I saw in the council books, an order to the Duke of ORMOND from CHARLES the second, in sixteen hundred and sixty two, to erect a mint at Dublin, or in any other proper place, with very ample instructions in every particular relating to it. But I believe, upon a representation of the great expences of such an establishment from the Lord Lieutenant and council, which I saw likewise, that design was laid aside. However it was not deemed contrary to the interest of England to allow the people of Ireland the benefit of a mint which related only to themselves. Indeed it seems plainly to be the interest of England, that the Irish should have a liberty of coining their own money, that they may not be under the necessity, which, they are at present, of carrying over the English coin, notwithstanding the severe laws which are made here to prohibit it. The want of coin is an apparent disadvantage in their commerce; and a new coinage would regulate all the wild discord of their foreign coins, and blend them into an orderly;

orderly proportioned mass for the service of the publick : But as the charge of coining is in England about two and a half per cent : besides the annual expence of house rent, and salaries for the officers and servants of the mint, it is possible that this might not quit the cost ; especially if it is considered, that further than the state thought fit to supply bullion to be coined, the mint would stand still, and the rent and salaries be a dead charge to the nation. It seems therefore to be the cheapest, as well as the wisest method of remedying this evil of the want of coin, that we should grant them the liberty of having an hundred thousand pounds, or more, coined at the mint in England, in tenpenny, or twelpenny pieces Irish ; which would save them all the expences of rent and salaries, and be the surest method of making their coin of the proper standard. Indeed if they were allowed only to coin pieces of sixpence and threepence value, it seems probable that they would find their account in it, by keeping them at least at home for the use of their artisans and manufacturers ; and especially if without diminishing the pure silver in this coin, they were permitted to encrease the allay, and the size, and hardness ; as the Dutch, and the Danes, and others do ; because at present by constant use, they wear so fast, and so thin, and are so small, that, besides their want of value, in time they become in danger of being blown away with the wind.

Customs.

WARE.
DAVIES.
SPENSER.

If the law of Gavelkind encreased their septes and names into such numbers as are not to be found in any other kingdom in Europe, and thereby created great parties and factions in times of trouble and dissension, adhering to one another with great constancy, there were also two customs peculiar to the Irish, which were the cause of such strong and violent combinations as were prejudicial to the good government and ordering of the state. The one of these was Fostering, and the other Gossipred ; and both of them in higher estimation with the natives of Ireland before the conquest, than with any other people in Christendom. By the first of these customs, the children were always put away to fosterers ; “ the potent and rich men, says Sir JOHN DAVIES [i], selling and the meaner sort buying the alterage of their children : and the reason was, that because in the opinion of this peo-
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[i] Hist. relations, &c. p. 180.

ple, Fostering hath always been a stronger alliance than blood ; and the Foster-children love, and are beloved of their Foster-fathers and their sept, more than of their own natural parents and their kindred". The other custom was that of Gossipred ; which though it is a sort of spiritual affinity by the canon law, and a juror that was a gossip to either of the parties might anciently have been challenged as not indifferent by our law, yet there never was any nation that ever made so religious and strict account of it as the Irish. Both this and the former custom obtained in other countries, as far as putting children out to nurse, and being sureties for them in baptism ; but they created no parties nor factions as they did in Ireland, whereby the great were enabled to oppress their inferiors and oppose their equals, and the lower people were countenanced or tolerated in their licentiousness.

If these customs were productive of a great deal of mischief to the state, there were others which were inconvenient and full of oppression to the meaner sort of people. Bouaght was a tax imposed at the will of the Lord, for the maintenance of horsemen and light armed foot ; and besides this, there was another tax laid four times a year on freeholders for the entertainment and wages of such soldiers ; upon which customs, were engrafted by the English a most wicked extortion, called Coigne and Livery, for such purposes. Coshery was a custom amongst the Irish chiefs or septs, of exacting entertainment for themselves and their retinue, their dogs and horses, from their tenants and those that were under their jurisdiction ; which was almost as grievous a burden as the other, and in which they literally eat them out of house and home. There were other customs of this kind, by which the Lords or little Kings were absolute tyrants, and the tenants not much better than slaves. As late however as since their conversion to Christianity, they had slaves which they bought and sold at a certain price ; as it appears from some canons of ancient Irish synods, in which the legacy of a Bishop out of the goods of the church is determined by the price of a maid. Among those servants were reckoned such as were taken in war, who were bought and sold at a certain price, and were often so redeemed. Besides these servants, they had others whom they called

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villains,

villains, whose lands were granted to them as part of the inheritance or farm of the Lord or Chief. These were not permitted to bear any military employment ; but after the manner of the old heroic ages, followed only the rustic labours of digging, hedging, plowing, and such kind of drudgery. The reader is not to imagine, that the name carried with it any such odium or reproach in those ancient times, as it hath done in later ages. We had the same name and the same sort of servants in England ; and the one meant no more than villagers to the Lord, and the other only the duties and customs of the village for the Lord's use.

It is probable that the first and most ancient manner of burying their dead was that of burning ; as we may learn from an old canon after their conversion to Christianity : in which it is said “ that Kings only were buried in churches, and that all other men were buried either in the fire, or under an heap of stones ; that no stranger shall have liberty of cutting the church — meaning making a grave in it — without the leave of the Prince ; and whosoever shall attempt to do so, shall give satisfaction according to the dignity of the place”. Besides the custom of burning, we may conclude from this canon, as well as from other circumstances of their antiquities already mentioned, another custom in burying their dead, which was under an heap of stones. There are many remains of this custom in several parts of the island ; and we know it was an ancient practise in many other countries, for men that had been signal, either for eminent virtues, or notorious villanies. An instance of the latter kind we find as early as amongst the children of Israel, when they buried ACHAN ; of whom it is said, “ that they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day”. Many bones and urns have been discovered under these heaps in several parts of Ireland ; and it is not improbable, that the custom may have been derived from the Jews, who were commanded to put to death their vilest malefactors, by stoning, or heaping stones upon them. Whence-soever it was derived, the custom is to this day still retained among the common native Irish. For as they carry a corpse to the grave, they set it down in a convenient place, and all the people who accom-

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pany it bring stones and raise an heap over it after it is interred. It was usual for the women to howl and clap their hands at the funeral of their friends ; and sometimes they were hired to this office when it was not thought there were enough without. The Scythians from whom they sprung, and even the Romans and Germans had the same sort of custom : and the expression of TACITUS on this subject is, “ that in women it is commendable to lament, in men to remember”.

After the view that we have taken of the religion, laws, and government of the Irish, we may naturally conclude, if we were not so informed, that the way of life of the first inhabitants 'till the Christian æra, was not much unlike that of the Patriarchs and the ancient Celtæ, simple, temperate, unpolished and unconfined ; especially as they had no other riches than cattle, and little or no traffick with any other nation. “ In the infancy of states”, says Dr. BLACKWELL [k], men generally resemble the public constitution. They have only that turn which the rough culture of accidents, perhaps dismal enough, through which they have passed, could give them. They are ignorant and undesigning, governed by fear and superstition its companion. There is a vast void in their minds : they know not what will happen, nor according to what tenour things will take their course. Every new object finds them unprepared, and they gaze and stare like infants taking in their first ideas of light”. This account is according to nature ; and in all probability bids fairer for a true description of the Irish, 'till commerce had polished and improved them, than what the ancient authors, such as STRABO and SOLINUS, say of them on the one hand, or the Irish historians and poets on the other. It is incredible to believe with the former, that they fed upon human flesh, that they eat up the dead bodies of their parents as a thing that was honourable, that they had no sense of virtue or religion, and that they knew no distinction between right and wrong : neither is it much more easy to believe what the latter tell us, that they had a great superiority over their neighbour nations, that the social and moral duties were carried to all the lengths which heathen lights could afford, and

Manners,

CAMDEN.
WARE.
KEATING.
WALSH.
BERKLEY.
O FLAHER.
Dissertat.
SPENSER.

[k] Life of Homer, p. 42.

that they had palaces and magnificent structures, equal to, if not surpassing in grandeur and expence, the most costly and splendid fabricks of the neighbouring nations. For notwithstanding this flourish of Dr. KEATING, who pretends so much to truth and impartiality, there is not a more certain fact in their whole history, than that they had no palaces nor structures of any other grandeur and expence, during the first age of the Irish, nor 'till the latter end of the middle age, than of wattles plaistered over on the sides, and covered on the top with turf or rushes. Perhaps in a country where woods were then so abounding as to be inconvenient, some few houses might be built of solid timber. But the other materials were near at hand, were least expensive, and most easily thrown up: and of these, it is probable, that their houses in general were constructed; and were only great or small according to the wealth or dignity of the inhabitants.

As they had little or no trade, so they had no corporate towns: and their villages were only a confused parcel of these huts placed at a little distance from each other, without any order or regularity, and generally in the middle of a wood; the avenues of which were defended with slight ramparts of earth, or trees felled and laid across one another. The palaces of their Kings and Princes were all made in the same simple manner, merely to answer the necessities and not the grandeur nor luxury of life: and so far did inveterate custom prevail among these people, that even after the reception of Christianity and the refinement of commerce, they could not for a long time persuade themselves to build their churches and monasteries of more solid and magnificent materials than their own houses. Thus it was not till the beginning of the ninth century, according to the best historians of their own, that the Irish had any structures built with stone and lime; and these were only a sort of round towers erected by the Danes or Easterlings, in order to watch the motions of the armies of the natives: and after the Irish had driven the Danes out of the island, these towers, according to some writers, were turned into bell-fries, and, according to others, into places of retirement

for penitents or anachorets. It is possible that some of them might be used for one purpose and some of them for another : but they were originally built as I have said ; and it was not 'till long after these, that churches and castles were built with stone. Had these towers been erected by the Irish themselves and for a religious purpose, as several of their antiquarians contend, it is highly probable that they would have had other buildings of the same materials, for their monasteries and churches especially : and yet it is confess'd by most, that the first chapel of stone in this island, was built at Bangor by O MORGHIR Archbishop of Ardmagh, who died in eleven hundred and forty eight. Mr. HARRIS, in his additions to WARE, who insists on the round towers being built by the Irish for religious uses, has explained away this expression of S. BERNARD relating to the chapel at Bangor, to mean only that it was the first church of lime and stone that had been seen in those uncivilized parts of Ireland ; and he has done it with some appearance of success. The palace of Eamania, mentioned before as the place of one of their national councils, we are told, was the only instance they had of architectonical magnificence among the ancient Irish, and was built three hundred and fifty four years before the Christian æra. It was destroyed, it seems, in the year of our redemption three hundred and thirty two, affording through so many ages such examples of splendour, greatness, and regular oeconomy, as do the greatest honour to the whole Milesian race. In order that the reader may not be misled, it may be proper perhaps to remind him, that all this may be true, as far as splendour, greatness, and oeconomy can be attained, by timber, wattles, plaister, turf, and rushes, put together in a rude unskilful manner, and nothing further. For they had no other materials ; and notwithstanding the architectonical magnificence abovementioned, it is certain that their skill, and their tools used in architecture, were mean and imperfect in the age wherein it was built.

In a country where the people had but few mechanical arts, where they lived on the produce of their own soil, and where coin and metals were not made equivalents for necessities, each clan must sit down in its

own hereditary canton, with a certain portion of land for pasturage and culture. In every such district each lived apart; not near enough to encroach or incommode, and not too far separated to be able to assist and assemble on any emergency. As they had no other than inland commerce during the greatest part of the first age, they held great markets or fairs in which they bartered their commodities with one another, and carried on several other affairs relating to domestic policy. They used little boats on their lakes or rivers like the Indian canoes, made of large trees hollowed: but their ships and larger vessels, in which they sailed upon the ocean with oars without the help of sails, were called Curraghs, made of wicker-work, and covered with the hides of beasts. These were the first ships and vessels used in the world: and as the Irish were for some time more secluded by their situation than any other people from commerce and intercourse with the rest of Europe, so these might probably continue longer in use amongst the people of that island than any where else.

Their whole wealth consisted in agriculture and herds of cattle; so that as they had nothing to export, they had also all the necessaries of life within themselves, and had therefore no occasion for traffick with other nations. In process of time indeed, as industry and experience made the produce of their land too great for home consumption, this put them upon exchanging their superfluities with other nations; and their commerce flourished, it must be owned, above that of Britain. Whether it is owing to the greater sloth of the present inhabitants, or to the depopulation of the country by so many wars and massacres, it may be hard to say; but many remains and traces of agriculture are now to be seen, in some of the most waste and uncultivated parts of the kingdom. So that the same country, whose chief commodity was furnishing other nations with corn, is now very often obliged to fetch their bread from foreign countries.—A strange and lamentable revolution, it must be acknowledged! The same soil and climate, but not the same labour and industry are to be found: and yet modern Ireland, by the improvements in navigation, hath numberless means of wealth and greatness which its

ancient inhabitants had not. But as one of their best writers says, "they are doomed to be singular in extremes; to be a great and learned people under the smallest advantages, and a miserable nation amid the greatest."

The several colonies of the first age lived there, it may be supposed, in the same manner as their parent nation of the Celtes lived in Gaul and Britain and Spain. They fed on the spontaneous productions of the earth, on the milk of their kine, and on what they could acquire by their skill in hunting, shooting with darts, and fishing. These last exercises, so necessary for their support, became consequently their chief employment; and such employment rendered them fierce, hardy, and impatient under restraint; to which their not living in towns or large villages did not a little contribute. The flesh of such animals as they could take administered to their food, and their skins contributed to their cloathing. At their ordinary entertainments they sat in a ring on rushes or straw; and in the middle was placed a table, whereon was set the bread which had been baked on a gridiron or before the fire, milk meats, flesh and fish both boiled and broiled; and in the mean time the cup went about very briskly. Their chief drink was beer made of barley as in these modern times, and a liquor, which we call mead, made of honey and water. The time of their feasting was usually in the evening, at which their bards always assisted; when they celebrated the praises of their heroes in verses and sonnets which they sung to their harps. The whole body of the people throughout every rank, were extremely fond of musick and poetry; and the arms of the kingdom were probably for that reason an harp. The harp and the bag-pipe were in use at their funerals also as well as at their feasts, in order to encrease the noise, and to encourage the women to cry after the Scythian manner; and those who could play well on those instruments were held in great esteem.

The military genius, from the nature of their government, and from their domestic warfare which lasted above a thousand years, it is natural to imagine, must hold one of the highest ranks in the state.

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Thus their Princes especially, were inured to fatigue and martial discipline from their infancy as much as any of their subjects, and made military stratagems a great part of their study. The Kings gave the order of knighthood to their sons at seven years of age with the following ceremony : At the time of the creation, the boys being armed with light and slender spears in proportion to their strength, run several courses against a shield that was set up and fastened in the midst of a plain for that purpose ; and he that broke most spears had the principal honour of the day. The Irish, like their progenitors, never made use of fortified towns for their defence, thinking them a check upon heroic bravery and a sort of coat of mail for cowards. They placed their defence as well as confidence in a martial fury, and in a dread of slavery more than of death itself. They began their onsets with the utmost enthusiasm, and yet they rallied with coolness and dexterity. Their Kings were so jealous of their glory, and this glory was so much envied, that from the beginning to the end of the history, there is scarce an instance to be found of any monarch's surviving the loss of his crown ; which he always wore on the day of battle. They were often attacked by faction 'till they crushed their opponents by the weight of power ; or, which much oftener happened, 'till their opponents subdued them by the force of arms. Their horsemen, who rode at first without saddles and afterwards without stirrups, were armed with arrows and javelins, and some with coats of armour. They had servants on foot who had only darts and who took care of their horses. Their military chariots were in great use, before the cavalry were introduced, to break the enemies ranks and to throw them into confusion ; at which they were so expert, that many great feats are recorded of their ancient martial charioteers. In the middle age they had two sorts of infantry, some called Galloglasses armed with an helmet, a coat of mail, and a long sword ; and in the right hand they carried a pole-ax with which they often did terrible execution. The light armed foot were furnished with darts and daggers or two edged javelins, in the use of which they were very valorous and expert. Military musick was much studied and delighted in by this warlike people, as it fired them
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with courage, enthusiasm, and contempt of danger ; and by the help of this alone they founded the charge, rallied, or retreated. In courage, other nations were no doubt their equals, in art and discipline probably their superiors ; but they exceeded all other troops in Europe in sustaining the severest fatigues of war. They were so greedy of conquest and of plunder, as well as so tenacious of what they had gained, that they fought with a strength and fury that nothing scarcely could withstand, but like fire and storm they drove all before them. Their constant ordinary militia in times of peace, about the Christian æra, consisted of three divisions of equal number, in all nine thousand men, under successive commanders of the greatest name for valour and experience in the art of war. These were kept in constant pay by the Monarch, Princes, and People, in order to guard the coasts from foreign enemies, and to keep all quiet at home. But in case of any emergency, either in order to suppress a rebellion, or to withstand an invasion from abroad, a power was given to the general to encrease his standing army to seven battalions, making in the whole one and twenty thousand. The famous FINN — so much celebrated of late in the pretended poems of OSSIAN, under the name of FINGAL — was the commander in chief of this illustrious body ; and many volumes are written of the great exploits of him and his heroes. The Irish forces in the pay of France, which are the flower of their army, to say nothing of any others, have in all their wars for these threescore years past, approved themselves the descendents of these valiant and warlike people.

Both the males and females of the ancient Irish, were generally tall, well made, and of a strong and hardy constitution ; very patient of cold and hunger, extremely frank and amorous, revengeful, proud, and slothful. They were very loose in the article of marriage, retaining concubines, and repudiating their wives at pleasure, living with them in common, and in short laying little or no restraint on their inclinations. The reader will observe, that I am speaking of their pristine state, and not after Ireland was become the seat of commerce and literature to the Western world : and then I shall escape the cen-

fures, which KEATING hath either ignorantly or malevolently thrown upon CAMDEN, and some others, who speak of them in such terms, as I have done. The dress of the old inhabitants was simple as their manners; the produce and manufacture of their own country. The Men wore a mantle and trowsers; the Women a mantle and petticoat. Both had brogues upon their feet, being something thicker than pumps sewed with leather; the Men had a cappeen and the Women a kircher upon their heads, throwing their mantles over them when they went out to keep off the sun or rain. The linnen cloth was anciently so extensive a manufacture in this country, that MORYSON says [1], the native Irish gentry used to wear thirty or forty ells in a shirt, all gathered and wrinkled, and coloured with saffron, because they never put them off 'till they were worn out. The great were apparelled anciently much in the same manner with the lower rank; allowing for the fineness of the texture, and the variety or rather the number of their colours. Indeed, it was the number of them in any garment which properly distinguished the rank of the wearer; and those entitled to six, came either next in magistracy or next in honour to the supreme monarch. This law did more, it is said, towards gaining esteem and respect than all the golden trappings of the East, and yet cost nothing. Besides it produced a noble emulation among men of letters; who, on proving themselves thoroughly skilled in the learning and philosophy of the country, received the vesture allotted for the provincial sovereigns, and consequently were next to them in honour. The education of their youth was begun in their early infancy, by taking them from habits of idleness and training them up to laborious exercises of body, at the same time that their minds were not left uncultivated. The pleasures of the chase superseded at stated times all other diversions, and no people in the world pursued them with greater eagerness. In this exercise they underwent inexpressible fatigues; which contributed greatly to their muscular strength, and gave them agility and firmness against the severity of the weather. In short the chase was such a school for teaching them vigilance, a skill in archery, patience under labour, and

[1] Morison's history part iii. p. 180.

long abstinence from food, that few foreign enemies could stand before them, and none could ever equal them in rapid marches and quick retreats. It was by these means that they often baffled all the forces of Britain and the Roman legions united, when they came hither to the assistance of their friends the Picts — These are the outlines of the manners of the ancient Irish: let us now turn to those of the present.

According to Sir William PETTY, “ they may be deduced from their original constitutions of body, from the air, from their ordinary food, from their state and condition, from the influence of their teachers, and lastly from their ancient customs which affect as well their consciences as their nature”. In their stature, shape, and complexion, they have not degenerated from their ancestors, and are nothing inferior to any other people. In their courage and intrepidity, it is well known that they do not disgrace their origine; nor is it in this particular only that they imitate their progenitors. For, above three parts in four of the mere Irish live in little hutts or cabins, without chimneys, doors, or windows. Their principal diet is potatoes, and milk sweet and sour, thick and thin, which in summer time is also their drink: in winter they drink water, and whisky — like our gin — when they can get it. But tobacco taken in short pipes, together with snuff, seems to be the great pleasure of their lives; insomuch that the chief part of their expence is to procure them. Notwithstanding the great plenty of flesh, they seldom eat any, unless it be of the smaller animals; and they are yet so far from being civilized, especially in villages distant from cities, and where the English manners have not prevailed, that their habitations, furniture, and apparel are as sordid as those of the savages in America.

Whether the laziness which is attributed to them—and very justly—is more derived from their ancestors, or their original constitution, it is hard to say: but it is certain that there is still among the native Irish, a very strong and remarkable antipathy to all labour; and that most of

them possess a cynical content in dirt and beggary, to a degree beyond any other people in christendom. The cabin of an Irish peasant is the cave of poverty : within you see a pot and a little straw, and without an heap of children almost naked tumbling on the dunghill. Their fields and gardens are a lively counterpart of SOLOMON'S description of the field of the slothful, and of the vineyard of the man void of understanding. In every road the ragged ensigns of poverty are displayed : the traveller often meets caravans of these miserable wretches, whole families in a drove, without clothes to cover, or bread to feed them ; both which might be procured with moderate labour. But the work of one man in the field will sustain a family of forty with potatoes ; and they build a hut or cabin in three days. The milk of one cow will afford food and drink enough for three men in the summer ; and they can get cockles, oysters, muscles, and crabs almost every where near the sea in great abundance. What need they therefore to labour hard, who can content themselves with this wretchedness ? Besides they have been taught, and they teach it one another, that this way of living is more like the patriarchs, their ancestors of old, and their saints of later times, by whose prayers and merits they are to be relieved, and whose examples they are therefore to follow. The reader must not take this as a description of the inhabitants of Ireland, but of the lowest sort of the mere native Irish ; nor of them universally, but in the parts most uncultivated by people of fortune. As to the thievery with which they are charged, and which they inherit likewise from their ancestors, this is common to all thin peopled countries, such as Ireland is ; where there are not many eyes to detect it, where what is stolen is easily hid or eaten, and where it is not difficult to burn the house, or to violate the persons of those who prosecute such crimes. But if such are the manners of the lowest sort, yet the Irish gentry, who approve themselves to be the remains of a free and learned nation, in their diet, houses, and apparell, resemble or rather exceed the English. Their hospitality is more extensive and general, their behaviour is polite, and their table elegant. Let this suffice for a description of the native Irish.

In the following characteristicks, I speak of the inhabitants of Ireland; and not as distinguished by this or that name and origine. Though no country in Europe is capable of more improvement than Ireland, yet it is as much behind other nations in arts and industry, as it is before them in the advantages of harbours, soil, and climate. Nor are natural advantages the only ones which they possess beyond their neighbours: they have many civil ones. It is the peculiar privilege of the Irish, to enjoy the fullest leisure for cultivating the arts of peace, and for studying the public welfare. They are neither embroiled with foreign wars, nor distressed nor perplexed with foreign affairs; and yet by their relation to England they in some sort reap the benefit of our wars and treaties. In short, with the expence of keeping up a standing force of twelve thousand men—encreased at this time to sixteen thousand—they are protected by the fleets and armies of Great Britain, whose interest it is to guard and defend them on every side. They pay no taxes of any kind for the support of government, except quit and crown rents, and two shillings a year for every hearth: so that whatever estates they have there, they have them all to themselves; without any deduction for a tax upon their land, which is so heavy a burden to the freeholders of England. The custom and excise duties, which are very small and few compared with ours, are appropriated to particular purposes of national utility.

But amidst all these advantages, “in such a climate and such a soil, under such a mild and equitable government, and with so many navigable rivers for domestic trade, to behold so many roads untrodden, so many fields untilled, so many houses desolate, and so many hands unemployed, this, said the late Bishop BERKLEY, is a new spectacle under the sun.” A spirit of improvement, it must be owned, however, hath of late years gone out amongst them, as may be seen in many parts of this Introduction; but there is yet a great deal left to do. The wise and good laws relating to the linen manufacture, the care and activity of that board, and the many noble designs of the Dublin society, have in some measure
introduced

introduced industry, and a cultivation of the sciences into that kingdom. But yet the gentry of Ireland, either not understanding, or not having a proper taste and notion of magnificence, affect wretched distinctions which impoverish themselves without enriching the public. It is questioned whether there is any country in Europe so good a customer for claret as Ireland, which they pay our enemies for with ready money: and the ladies send out a greater proportion of their wealth for fine apparel than any other females in the whole world. But yet no people in Europe are so meanly provided with houses and furniture suitable to their estates, as the people of fortune in Ireland.

One would think that noble houses well built and furnished, a great train of servants, a fine equipage, and an elegant plentiful table, are distinctions glittering and splendid enough to feed the vanity of any mortal: And these, by procuring the magnificence of the rich, would also provide for the necessities of the poor. A grand mansion house highly finished and furnished, extensive gardens beautifully disposed, and decorated with water, wood, and statues—for all which the materials are to be found in Ireland in great plenty—would be an improvement that would remain at home, pass on to the next heir, and adorn and enrich the country. This would be a taste for magnificence which would excite emulation, promote a spirit of industry, and employ many hands that are now idle, and consequently miserable or licentious. But this is a taste, which the gentry of Ireland have in general been very defective in: and it is left to the present age, to adorn their country with sumptuous edifices, sculpture, and painting, and many other distinctions which they may procure without a foreign trade.—I must again caution the reader against understanding this representation in too strict a sense. For there are many noble houses, and some public edifices erected of late years, which would do honour to any nation. But in describing a people, an historian is obliged to speak as they generally are; and in that sense it is still too true, notwithstanding these exceptions, that the men of fortune in Ireland are very deficient in the articles abovementioned.

I persuade myself however that they will not long remain so,—not from any thing that I have said—but from the known qualifications of their present chief governour, the Earl of HALIFAX, to direct the public taste.

Having now presented the reader with the best accounts that I could meet with of the several particulars which are necessary for his understanding the following history, it is time to put an end to this Introduction, and to proceed to the work itself.



T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

I R E L A N D.

B O O K I.

IT cannot be a matter of surprize to any one, who has considered the vanity which every nation hath fallen into of deriving themselves from a more ancient origine than can be proved, that the natives of Ireland should have recourse to fable and invention to magnify their antiquity. It is a circumstance also common to every country in the world in the first and ruder ages, that through a great series of time tradition held the place of history; and as little matter of moment was transacted in their first settlements, so there was little matter to be recorded. Tradition however must necessarily be defective in the two important circumstances of time and place, for very obvious reasons. The facts were recited in the times wherein they happened, when it was unnecessary to recite the

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dates or places; and when they afterwards came to be enquired into, from not being handed down they never could be recovered.

It is not therefore peculiar to the country of which I am now going to write, that its earliest ages are buried in obscurity, or involved in fable and tradition. The nature of man and the constant course of affairs in this earthly system, preclude us from receiving any materials for history which may be called authentic, of the first age of any nation; and in fact there are none in profane history to be found. It is a circumstance lamented by every sensible historian that ever wrote; and should consequently teach every reader to lay but little stress on the originals which are recorded of any people. Curiosity may prompt us to see what is said of the earliest ages that we can trace; but the author will mispend his abilities, and the reader will waste his time, who shall study those relations, and depend upon them for history: and yet amidst all the fabulous or traditionary accounts which are given of nations, it is possible to extract something which bears a near resemblance to truth, if it is not the whole, or nothing but the truth. A great deal of ore indeed is to be dug out of the rubbish of ancient authors to come at this small quantity of gold; and it must be sifted with patience and industry as well as art. But this which is the most difficult and unpleasant task to the writer, affords the reader less knowledge and entertainment than any other.

Though I have made these concessions, conformably to the sentiments of Lord BOLINGBROKE, in favour of the uncertainty of ancient history on the one hand, yet on the other hand it seems to me, that the criticks have been much severer in their censures of the old historians of these northern nations than they ought to have been; and there are every day almost things brought to light, by comparing the history of one country with another, which strengthen, if they do not absolutely confirm, the accounts which have been generally given by these historians.

If some people have been too credulous in believing all the traditions of their country which have been handed down, it is as certain that others have treated them with too much levity ; giving them all up as fables and forgeries to impose upon posterity. Such a design appears ridiculous as well as wicked ; and it has happened in fact, that we have had stronger historical proofs of the reality of many of these accounts, once treated as fabulous, than we have of several others of a thousand years later date. “ In these kind of criticisms men often betray their own ignorance or prejudice, by expecting plainer proofs from these old writers, than the remote age in which they lived has rendered possible. Thus though correct histories could not be written, before letters and writing were invented, yet the keeping an account of the number of their Kings and the length of their reigns, was as easy as the Muscovite computation, by stringing beads upon a wire. It is a great mistake to imagine, that time, which devours brass or marble, annihilates truth ; because things that are once true, are true for ever ; nay further it must be allowed, that lies and fables added to them, neither make them less true, nor less useful to those who have judgment enough to discern the difference ; if it did, we must throw away the modern history as well as the ancient. Many learned writers, with the helps that we have gained from historical libraries, since the invention of printing and other improvements, have made discoveries of ancient times, as wonderful as the late astronomers with their telescopes have made in the stars and planets. But these discoveries have been gradual and improving, instead of growing less by time [*m*]”.

The Bards, as I have said in the Introduction, were the only historians which the first inhabitants of Ireland, and indeed all their progenitors the Gauls, had in every country. Nothing was committed to writing in those ages, except the arcana of the Druids ; but all public transactions being turned into verse were sung at their public feasts, and when they went to war, accompanied with their harps. The neces-

HUTCHIN.
Dissertat.
KEATING.
Mss.

[*m*] Bp. Hutchinson's Defence of ancient Historians, *passim*.

fary ornaments of poetry give a great scope to a poetic genius to enlarge, illustrate, and invent ; and what the first bards might relate with great adherence to truth, as it was not committed to writing, their successors might embellish with metaphor and fiction ; 'till at last the truth might be so overrun with fable, as to make it difficult to distinguish them. As disagreeable a circumstance as this may be in investigating the Irish history, it is one of the most natural signs of its antiquity. We ought not therefore to enter into a peevish disquisition of the truth of circumstances, which poetry will never bear, and is against its laws : it is enough, if the gross of the history and its chief characters are true. It is however as certain, as any fact can be at so great a distance of time, that there is a good foundation for the ancient history of Ireland, in the sonnets and ballads of their bards or poets ; if we confine it, as we ought to do, to the memory of the first founders and more famous heroes of a nation, with some draughts of genealogies for Princes or great men, without adopting the fables and forgeries intermixed with them.

Thus we are told by O'FLAHERTY, the best chronologer of the Irish, "that till the year of the world three thousand nine hundred and thirty nine, during a period of above a thousand years, the poets had the sole power of delivering laws to the people, and that they pronounced their judgments in verse ; laws not being yet committed to writing [n]". But if an equal indulgence is given to the first poetical records of these bards, which is given to the traditions of other ancient nations, the use of letters and arts can be proved near as early in Ireland as in any other European country. Here the great security of the nation from foreign invasions would retain them ; and a popular form of government for many ages might no doubt improve them. Those circumstances must naturally give rise to history in a very early period ; and the fragments that are left of it afford not only many domestic facts, but several instructive lights also regarding these ancient people. Many extracts from these records, which have been collected, translated, and printed by the

[n] Ogygia, p. 216.

natives, reach up very near the beginning of its existence, and tell their several colonies in order, the names of their leaders, and the public accidents which happened in their time.

These particular details indeed are brought as an objection to the credit of the Irish history by Mr. INNES, in his Critical Essay on the ancient inhabitants of North Britain; some of which details no doubt are false and fabulous. But if we consider the manner of writing in those very early times, as mentioned above, this is not sufficient to discredit, or set aside, all the history in which they are found. In these extracts it is remarkable that the characters of the heroes, though of the same kind, and excelling in one and the same thing — princely courage or bravery — yet are all diversified, and marked with some peculiarities that distinguish them. This could scarcely ever have been feigned; it was truth and nature alone that could form those differences, so real and yet so nice, and afterwards offer them to a representation. “To describe so many Men, to point out their manners, to paint their persons, to relate their adventures, and make a long recital of their families, seems to be beyond the power of fiction. The making or feigning faculty, be it ever so rich and inventive, after an effort or two recoils upon itself; and if it finds no store of originals within, either falls a repeating the same characters with a tedious uniformity, or contrives false ones that glare and make a show, but by some airy feature certainly betray their unlikeness to truth [o]”. Let these observations be well considered by those who deny the authenticity of all ancient history, and let it be applied particularly to that of Ireland, and they will afford a collateral evidence of its antiquity.

But as a more convincing proof than speculative refinements, that these poetical records are not entirely fable void of truth, it must be observed that they have been authenticated in some degree by Sir ISAAC

Dissertat.
NICHOLSON.
KEATING.

[o] Enquiry into the Life of Homer, p. 304.

NEWTON'S account of early foreign nations ; which corresponds in a surprizing manner, even to the names and parentage of their Spanish ancestors within the same period of time, with the accounts which their bards have given ; as may be seen in a parallel drawn up with great accuracy by a late historical writer, and which will be given in its proper place. Such a great author of our own times having given this repute to those early records, not only without consulting them, but even also under the persuasion that there were none, it is expected — and I think not unreasonably — that it will add a credit to their more recent history, and command an attention from the learned, which has been hitherto but faintly given, if not absolutely denied. Indeed if some of their writers are to be credited, Ireland is perhaps the only country in the world, which made history a national cause of the greatest importance to the state ; and where real transactions only are to be looked for in the earliest ages. According to them, these bards were not only endowed by the government and prime families, as already mentioned in the Introduction, but that no means might be overlooked to convey genuine history to posterity, their productions were to undergo the solemn test and sanction of the great council of the nation in a triennial Parliament or convention ; where such accounts only as were deemed worthy of credit were approved, and a memorial of them entered into the registers of that High Court. If any authors were found to pervert the truth, or impudently to prostitute it in order to serve the purposes of party, to misrepresent unfortunate or defeated virtue, to contradict or conceal undoubted facts, with the same perverse intention of prejudicing fallen patriots, who had no other than historical truth for their vindication, in such cases the authors were degraded, and made liable to the penalties inflicted by a law against occasional and incendiary historians. If this account is to be depended on — and when stripped of the colouring with which it is heightened, and restrained to no higher a date than about three hundred years before the Christian æra, nobody can say that it is not — it gives a great idea of the wisdom of this people, and an authenticity to their history which is to be given, I believe, by no other nation under the sun. But whatever truth there may

may be in this early care of their records, there are concurrent testimonies from foreign authors of the great antiquity of this island, which are not subject to the suspicion of that partiality, with which the criticks charge these domestic annals.

The inhabitants of this country, should be considered in their history under four different ages. The first age, which may be called the Fabulous, comprehends a space of about four hundred years, from the earliest accounts of time, to the coming in of the Milesians from Spain; through the several colonies of Parthalanians, Nemedians, Belgians, and Danonians. The second period, which may be called the Obscure, begins with the Spanish invasion, and extends through a course of thirteen hundred years, to the arrival of S. PATRICK who converted the island. The third or middle age, which may be called the Enlightened, begins with the planting of the Gospel by that missionary, and extends to the conquest by the English; which contains a space of seven hundred and forty years. The latter age which may be called the Historical, may be computed from the reign of HENRY the Second, 'till its final settlement at the revolution by King WILLIAM. In order to obviate all confusion that may arise, I shall carry on the history according to this division; and it shall be my business all along, as it should be of the writers of all ancient history whatever—and indeed it is all that I can do at this distant period—to clear away the truth from the great rubbish of fiction, and to polish it from the rust which it has acquired by time and ignorance.

The first age of the Irish according to the division abovementioned, I have called the Fabulous; and yet even in this age, it is the opinion of Bishop USHER, LOYD, CAMDEN, and many other of our best antiquarians, that there are several remains of true history which ought to be received. Even INNES who hath combated the credit of these high antiquities more than any writer that I have seen, allows that in this age “there was some kind of government without doubt in Ireland, probably that of a King or single chief or leader, and some uncertain traditions

O FLAHER.
Mth.
KEATING.
WARE.
HUTCHINS.
HOLLINS.
COMERT.
CAMDEN.

ditions of more memorable transactions [p]". But be this as it may.—According to the custom of all other nations, in deriving their glory from their high antiquity, we are told in the Irish chronicles, that their country was first inhabited by one of NOAH'S nieces before the flood, and even before the art of navigation was at all known in the world. But the historians who give this up as a fiction, yet presume to people the island immediately after the dispersion of mankind at Babel—which is about three hundred years after the flood—with some of JAPHET'S posterity.

PARTHOL.
A.M. 1969.

According to these historians, one of them named PARTHOLAN, the sixth in descent from MAGOG his second son, encouraged by the late attempt of NIMROD then newly possessor of the Assyrian monarchy, searched so far west, in order to discover a country where he might have the sole jurisdiction, as at last he came to Ireland. Here he settled himself, with his three sons and their wives, and a thousand men whom they brought with them under their command. They are so particular as to give us the day of the month when he landed, and not only the names of his three sons, but of a favourite greyhound also, of his servants, and of his oxen. To the sons they have given the character of very active and valiant men; who searching the Island from side to side and in every part, made it the place of their habitation, and left remembrance of their names, which remain in these places at this day. It is said of the old man their father, that he was driven out of Greece, where he had slain his father and mother in order to come at the crown; and landing here, had in a short space of time, with the assistance of so many hands, converted into plains a great part of the country overgrown with woods and thickets. In order to embellish the narrative, there is a formal story of his jealousy of his wife and one of his servants; which the old Bard who records it has amplified with some humour. It is reported in the chronicles of that time, that he found no more than three lakes and nine rivers in the island at his arrival; but that before his death which

[p] Critical Essay, &c. 8vo. p. 409.

was thirty years after, seven lakes more broke out, the names of which are recorded.

Though loughs and rivers are as old as the sea and land, and we see no new ones break out in our days, yet those great lakes abovementioned are so far from being like so many millstones to sink the credit of the history, in the opinion of Bishop HUTCHINSON, “ that they are strong proofs, he says, not only that they who recorded them were led by the reality of the facts, but that they were wise men who wrote them for the instruction of posterity, that they might know which way nature moved. The most eminent geographers tell us of more and greater new lakes than these, which have covered the low grounds in many other countries;” of which he gives several instances [q]. Was the other part of the story probable, there would be no great difficulty in conceiving greater changes than those which the sea has made since the flood.

After this manner, say the historians, was Ireland first inhabited under the government of PARTHOLAN and his offspring; though some other rovers might have peopled it first from Britain. But they not having left the names of any governors that had been over them, nor how long they had continued, the Irish æra begins from him. However to make their history still more heroic, according to ancient custom, they tell us that together with this posterity of JAPHET, or soon after, there came into this island certain godless people of the stock of NIMROD the descendants of HAM, called Fomorians or giants; not only on account of their bodily size and strength above the common proportion of other men, but also on account of their being wanderers who oppressed the weak with violence and rapine, in order to acquire the sovereignty to themselves. As a reason for their quarrelling with their fellow colonists, my manuscript says, that they repined at the blessing pronounced upon SHEM and JAPHET, and thought it necessary to withstand all lawful rule and dominion, lest the curse of slavery predicted by NOAH should light

[q] Hutchinson's Defence of anc. Hist. p. 70.

upon them. Wherefore withdrawing their obedience from their lawful governors of the tribe of JAPHET, they set up a chief of their own stock ; maintaining his dominion by bringing the other subjects into continual bondage. Various was the success at different times between the original inhabitants and the invaders ; to the great uneasiness and disadvantage of those who loved to live in quiet under their lawful rulers. But at last it was determined, by one general battle, either to subdue these proud rebellious tyrants, or nobly to lose their lives in support of liberty, and so be free from further misery.

However, as many disputes and dissensions had arisen amongst themselves since their first settlement, which had weakened their forces in some measure, they judged it right to make a peace with one another, before they put the whole state to hazard in a general battle with the common enemy. Concluding therefore an agreement which settled all their differences, and a league being entered into to stand heartily by one another, and to unite their strength against the Fomorianians, they assembled their forces from every part of the island. The battle was soon joined ; and each side fought with very dubious success, and with incredible valour and fury, for several hours : at last the victory inclined to the Partholanians, and a general slaughter ensued of the Gigantic enemy. For the former being determined to deliver themselves from them for ever, that they might no more feel the miseries which they had before endured, made such a bloody use of their victory, that they never ceased the carnage 'till they had put every man and woman and child that could be met with to the sword. Nor did their revenge and animosity end with this : they would not vouchsafe to bury the carcases of the slain ; but casting them out like so many dead dogs, the air of the whole island was so corrupted with the stench arising from them, as brought on a plague which swept off all the inhabitants and desolated the country for thirty years.

Thus ended the first colony which settled in Ireland, after a possession of thirty years. It must be owned that the historians differ in their relation

relation of it very widely, and especially in the dates which they assign for its invasion and continuance ; — and even in true history it would be no wonder. For in adjusting the account of the beginning of kingdoms, and the first inhabitants of a country, insuperable difficulties must be met with : and the higher enquiries are pursued, and the nearer we come to the origine of a nation, the more obscure are its antiquities ; ending generally in poetical fictions that are scarce worthy of a place in historical writings. The most that can be said for the account which has now been given, is that it is grounded on probable facts, and that the retention of such facts evinces the early use of letters in this island. If ever such a colony invaded Ireland, it could not come from Greece, but either from Gaul or Britain. The little knowledge of navigation in those early ages would not admit of longer voyages ; and the bringing them from remoter regions and describing their great exploits, we may be assured are nothing else, but the humour common in those days of swelling the originals of nations with the marvellous and heroic. Amidst the variety of dates in reciting these old accounts, which have probably been inserted by later writers who have copied and translated these accounts, I have thought it best to abide by those of OFLAHERTY ; who took incredible pains to settle the chronology of the Irish history ; and whose authority is allowed by all writers since to be most worthy of observation. According therefore to his computation — though I believe it may be antedated about a hundred and fifty years,—I shall now proceed with the history.

When the country had lain desolate and without inhabitants for thirty years another colony under the conduct of NEMEDIUS, a descendent of MAGOG, made a descent upon this island with his wife and four sons, and a thousand and twenty men, in thirty four ships from the Euxine sea. During the time of this colony, four other lakes broke out, the names of which are given in an old sonnet ; and their chief having a mind to improve the soil and to cultivate the country, cut down twelve woods of a very large extent, and laid the land on all sides open. Having some African pirates in his train called Fomorians—a name for no particular people but for any transmarine nation — and who at this time

NEMEDIUS.

A. M. 2029

and afterwards settled in the North of Ireland, NEMEDIUS employed four of them, who were master builders, to erect two royal forts, which having finished with equal skill and expedition, the artists were the next morning by his orders put to death ; lest they should afterwards, says the history, build other structures surpassing those of his in splendour and magnificence. Many of these Fomorians having at different times migrated into Ireland, were engaged by the Nemedians in three bloody battles, in which they were the conquerors, but in the fourth which was more desperate than all the rest, they were defeated, and the greatest part of them cut in pieces.

The manuscript in my custody gives a different account in what follows from the printed history ; and as it is shorter, I shall give it the preference. It tells us, that NEMEDIUS and two thousand of his people dying of the plague, the Fomorians taking advantage of so great a weakening of the colony and of the death of their chief, stirring up a fresh revolt against them and overcoming them, oppressed them so unmercifully, that the Nemedians growing desperate were resolved to overcome or die. After a sharp and bloody contest, in which fortune was favourable to their attempt, they drove the Fomorians out of the island : but these returning from Africa with fresh forces, in their turn subdued the Nemedians, and made so great a slaughter of them, that almost all the remainder were determined to leave the island under their three chief commanders. Thus BREAC went to Thracia with his company from whom descended the Belgæ, of whom we shall hear further under the name of Firl-bolgs ; JOBATH with his people went to Bœotia, who will make their appearance again under the name of Tuath-de danans, and BRIDTAN repaired to England, from whom sprung the Brigantes. The psalter of Cashel, which is a record of great authority in the first and second age of the Irish, takes notice that the Welsh in Britain, are descended originally from this BRIDTAN, and some of the most ancient verses of their Bards confirm it.

BELGIANS.

A.M. 2657

The Nemedians being dispossessed of the island which they had inhabited two hundred and seventeen years, the Africans were sole masters of

of it without interruption from any invader : but differing perpetually amongst themselves and measuring every thing by might, they were never able to arrive at any establishment, and the country was again dispeopled till two thousand six hundred and fifty seven ; at which time the Belgians, called by the Irish Firl-bolgs — some of the descendents of NEMEDIUS and of those who had been driven away — took possession of it, with a colony of five thousand people under five principal leaders. Almost all their histories agree in a story of these people, which yet we must allow to be fabulous ; and therefore I shall not trouble the reader with it. A modern writer of their antiquities has said, [r] that the name of Firl-bolgs, so often mentioned in the Irish manuscripts, signifies no more than a creeping man, or one who lived in a cave ; and that there are great numbers of subterraneous caverns, and vaults dispersed about the island, in which the intelligent antiquarians affirm these people lived, or at least retreated to them in times of danger. It is well known that the Belgians who were a considerable people of Gaul, had large settlements in England, in its first and earliest state, from whence they might very naturally migrate into Ireland : and as all our best historians and antiquaries agree, that the first peopling of Ireland was from hence, to which opinion they are led by a great number of concurrent circumstances, — “more decisive with regard to the origin of nations, than fabulous traditions or the tales of annalists” —so, if I might be allowed to offer my conjecture upon a point of such high and obscure antiquity, it seems to me extremely probable, that the Belgic colony from South Britain were the first inhabitants of Ireland ; and that all that has been said above, of NOAH’s niece and others before the flood, and of PARTHALON, NEMEDIUS, and the Fomorians since, together with the sailing of the Firl-bolgs from Greece, is a mere poetical fiction, according to the humour of those early days, of deducing the origin of nations from the remotest regions, and the highest point of time.

The reader will observe, that I mention this only as my own conjecture, and not from the authority of any writer ; but this conjecture is founded,

[r] Smith’s State of the county of Cork, p. 402. vol. II.

not in fancy and imagination, but on the probable events of things, and on reading over and comparing the ancient history of many people. It is so natural for the first inhabitants of Ireland to come from Britain, that it is irrational and absurd to suppose any thing else ; and of which many negative and positive proofs, which have been already hinted in the Introduction, might be produced. NENNIUS, the oldest English writer that we have, has said, that Britain was peopled from Gaul in the third age of the world ; which he computes to be concluded at the birth of DAVID. According to the best chronologers, DAVID was born in less than twenty years after the year of the world two thousand nine hundred ; and therefore if we suppose the Belgians to have migrated from England in a short time after they were settled there, —in the third age of the world according to this computation—we shall find that it agrees exactly with the account of this colony given above ; at least it will appear, that their planting themselves in Ireland, in the year of the world two thousand six hundred and fifty seven, was in the third age according to NENNIUS, and but about two hundred and fifty years before its expiration. We have not only the testimony of all their chronicles and historians, that these people invaded Ireland about that period, but it is also highly probable to suppose, that England was not long inhabited, before the natural encrease of the people, and the vicinity of Ireland to it,—which might be seen from many parts of it in clear weather,—would tempt some of them to transport themselves thither, according to the custom of those times, to search after other settlements. Whether there is any strength in this conjecture, the reader must now determine ; and I shall turn again to the history.

The five commanders of this colony, we are told, were the sons of DELA ; and according to the form of government which prevailed in Britain and Gaul, which is another proof of their original, they divided the island into five parts ; in each of which one of the brothers was head and called King ; and SLANGHEY who had the province of Leinster for his share, was monarch of the whole, or chief commander of the Pentarchy, in case of danger. In other cases, the several states or provinces had no dependance on each other, but had perpetual quarrels

rels and contests among themselves. The chiefs of this colony were the first Kings in Ireland ; but their power as well as authority was circumscribed within narrow bounds, and their administration was dangerous in proportion to its eminence. On every popular disgust they were obliged to account for their conduct before the severest of all courts, that of the people ; this put their Kings under an absolute necessity of playing faction against faction, 'till death or victory determined their fate. In these sorts of contests among themselves, in rebellions against the monarchs, the Belgians possessed the island eighty years, through a succession of nine sovereign Chiefs ; two of which commanded the country jointly, and at the end of that time were vanquished by another colony. The last of these monarchs, we are told, was a very fortunate Prince ; peace and plenty were enjoy'd all over the island during his government ; and he restrained the outrages of the people by laws, and kept them in obedience and civility by wholesome punishments.

In the story of these Belgians, given by all their writers, after their settlement upon the island, there is nothing fabulous or improbable in the least ; and here I fix the date of the first peopling of Ireland by this colony from Britain. If I should be mistaken on a subject so obscure, it is no wonder ; but this being no earlier than eight or nine hundred years after the dispersion of mankind, there is full space of time enough allowed, in my opinion, for the descendants of JAPHET to multiply, and elbow one another out from the more pleasant climates of the South, and to acquire settlements and possessions in these Northern regions. There is time enough allowed in this computation, for navigation to be learnt and propagated, for commerce to be extended, and for all the arts to be understood which are necessary to new establishments. Though mankind at first had a humour of keeping together, as MOSES tells us, yet they soon saw it was a vain unnatural project ; and as GOD had made the earth wide and large, with great variety of blessings in every part of it, that his design must be to separate and spread them abroad, that they might communicate and exchange their

treasures with one another. This taught them the wisdom of searching the bowels of the earth in every corner, of subduing and improving both sea and land, and of dividing and enjoying the fruits and blessings of all: and as there is a volatile part in all people that inclines them to move further and further than their breeders and the multitude, so the rising generation would travel and migrate fast by land, but faster much by the sea shore in little coasting vessels. Their merchants would carry out and set to sale the wares of their own country; and their pirates would go to fetch in plunder. These travellers would magnify some of the wonders that they met with; and the remotest parts would be oftener mentioned by their historians, and in the sonnets of their Bards, than the places that lay nearer to them.

This is a rational foundation for supposing this country to be peopled, at least as early as I have placed it: and in fact our great chronologer TALLENTS, in laying before us the first peopling and the following changes of all the known nations of any eminence, has put Britain and Ireland together at the head of the column. The learned BOCHART also, in observing how GOD's promise of enlarging the borders of JAPHET were fulfilled by the great extent of the countries which were his portion, and in naming the countries included in it, puts Britain and Ireland as the two first of the catalogue which he gives of JAPHET's dominions. If the foregoing reasoning and authorities are not sufficient to convince the reader, that I have not peopled Ireland in an age too early, I have nothing further to offer, and must stand condemned in his opinion of a vain conjecture. But if it is tried in the two ways, in which all historical systems must be tried, whether it is consistent with probability, and whether it is supported by such evidence as it is reasonable to expect, I presume to think it will stand the test. For as the Jews, even before they had the history of MOSES, and before letters were invented, found ways to preserve their genealogies, and many of their chief actions down from ADAM, why should it be thought incredible, that the Irish, who were an observing people, should carry their history above thirteen hundred years before CHRIST, which is not half the way up to the beginning of heathen history? But I shall leave this conjecture now to support itself as it may, and shall resume the thread of the narration.

In the tenth year of the reign of the last Belgic monarch, another colony, called by the Irish Tuatha-de-Danans, of the posterity of NEMEDIUS, invaded the Island. We are told by some of the antiquaries, that they were called by this name, as being the descendents of the three sons of DANAN, who were so expert in the black art, and the mystery of charms and enchantments, that the inhabitants of the country where they lived distinguished them by the name of Gods. Other antiquaries as learned, say that this colony were so called because they were divided into three tribes; the first tribe which consisted of their principal leaders being named Tuatha, which signifies a commander; the second tribe were called Dee, meaning Gods, and were the Druids or priests; and the third had the name of Danan, which signifies art or poetry, and consisted of their Bards. They all agree however in telling a very marvellous tale of this colony; which made a fit subject for poetry, and suited well enough with the ignorance and superstition of the times in which they wrote. They tell us that the Nemedians who went with JOBATH into Bœotia, or Achaia, when they were driven out of Ireland by the Africans, as it hath been mentioned, settled near the city of Thebes; that here they learned the art of necromancy and enchantment, and had acquired such a magical power of working miracles, as to infuse fresh life and vigour into the bodies of those who were slain in battle; that having assisted the Athenians their neighbours in this manner in the wars they had with the Assyrians, the latter by the advice of a Druid, defeated their skill by a counter charm, of driving a stake of quick-beam through the dead bodies of their enemy; that perceiving their art to be no longer effectual, and for fear of falling into the hands of the Assyrians, they quitted the country, and wandered about from place to place 'till they came to Norway; where they were received with great hospitality by the inhabitants, and admired for their learning and skill in magic; that the Danes assigned them four cities to teach school in, and having continued there some time, they went thence to Scotland and made a settlement for seven years, at the end of which time they swarmed over to Ireland; that when they came upon the coast they made use of their enchantments to screen them from the observation of the inhabitants; that accordingly by their magic skill they formed a mist about them for three days and nights, and in this manner they disembarked and marched into the country without being discovered, 'till they sent to the Belgians to

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demand the kingdom and give them battle ; and that from one of the Danish cities they brought the Stone of destiny.

This famous stone, it seems, had two wonderous properties that are recorded in their sonnets : the one that in whatever country it was preserved, a prince of the Scythian race would undoubtedly govern ; and the other, that when the monarchs of Ireland were enthroned upon this stone, if a good choice was made, it would yield a strange sort of noise ; and if they had chosen ill, no sound was heard to issue from it ; but that it lost this property at the birth of CHRIST, when all other oracles became dumb. If such a fact there ever was relating to this stone, there is no doubt the sound was emitted by some artifice of the Druids ; and therefore when Christianity prevailed to their final overthrow, it is no wonder that its pretended oracular virtue should be at an end. Under a full persuasion of the truth of its first property, a Prince of the blood royal of Ireland, about whose name historians are divided, having subdued the country of North Britain, resolv'd to be crowned upon it as the first King of Scotland ; and accordingly requested his relation the Irish monarch to send him the stone, that he might perpetuate the succession in his family. From this time it was preserved with great esteem and devotion in the abbey of Scoon, the royal seat of the Pictish and Scottish Kings, 'till EDWARD the First, of England, who was weak enough to believe the virtues attributed to it, and having a mind to be King of Scotland, brought it forcibly away from thence, and had it placed under the inauguration chair in Westminster-Abbey. It is still preserved there to this day, but by the name of JACOB's stone ; from a notion among the vulgar that it is a part of the Patriarch's pillar. It must be owned that the coronation of the Kings of England over this stone seems to confirm its title of the Stone of destiny ; but it reflects no great honour on the learning or understanding of the nation, to retain a remnant of such ridiculous Pagan superstition in so important and solemn an act. But to return.

Having given the reader the fabulous account of this colony of the Tuatha-de-Danans, it is proper now to lay before him the probable history, as it is related by the most authentic writers. These people were no other than the Dannonians of Great Britain who had swarm'd into Scotland ; and
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according to the humour of those times, had after a while sailed to Ireland in quest of a new settlement; where some that were before only subordinate might have the chief command. As soon as they were landed they burnt all their shipping, to intimate their resolution of never more returning. Thus we know it was the custom of the Goths and Vandals, when they found their country too full, to choose out their youth by lot, and send them to seek their fortunes, with some of the younger sons of their Princes at their head: it was in vain for them to look back, for as there was no room for them at home, they must either find out new places abroad or die in the attempt. With such sentiments or resolutions the Dannonian colony invaded Ireland; and after a bloody and desperate engagement, defeated the Belgians on the plain of Moytura with the slaughter of ten thousand men. Thus vanquished, and having lost their monarch in the field of battle, the Belgians disdaining to live in subjection to the conquerors, retreated to the neighbouring islands of Arran, Ila, Man, and some of the Hebrides; in hopes of an opportunity to regain a country which they had been deprived of by force and power. They had not waited above twenty years before such an opportunity presented. For some other wanderers having found the way to this island, and being pleased with its climate and fertility, had an intention of settling with them; but not agreeing with the Dannonians, the country once more became the seat of discord.

In the midst of these dissensions, the Belgians were allowed, if not invited to return, in order to assist the weaker party against their former enemies. This conjunction produced the second battle of North-Moyturey near the lake of Arrow; a place surrounded with high hills, great rocks, and narrow defiles, and therefore probably pitched upon on purpose by the weaker side. Here however the Dannonians were again victorious, and gave their adversaries a signal overthrow; which makes a memorable æra in the ancient history. In the first battle NUADHA their King lost his hand, which was supplied by one made of silver, that gave him the surname of Silver handed; and in the last battle he lost his life. As every abortive attempt for liberty serves only to redouble the distresses of a conquered and the insolence of a victorious people, so the unfortunate Belgians remaining in the

island smarted grievously under the tyranny of their invaders, during the continuance of their power. They were obliged to bear all the hardships which such an early age had taught their oppressors to inflict : and their conquerors proved like those of most other countries ; teaching mankind a lesson in every age almost without exception, that the most violent assertors of liberty mean it only for themselves. Some of our English historians have added to this account, that BRENNIUS the brother of the British Monarch, having a fleet at this time just ready to transport some forces into Gaul, diverted his expedition, and made a push for the conquest of this island. But the inhabitants, though quarrelling with the utmost rage against each other, yet were not in a disposition to receive a conqueror over them all from a foreign country. The Irish historians are all of them silent on this fact ; and there is probably no truth in it at all. The government of the Dannonians, under nine succeeding Monarchs, continued for an hundred and ninety seven years, till the arrival of the Milesians from the Northern parts of Spain put an end to their name and nation.

These several colonies lived in Ireland, there is no doubt, in the same manner which their parent nations did in Gaul and Britain. They fed on the spontaneous productions of the earth, on the milk of their kine, and on what they could acquire by their skill in hunting, shooting with darts, and fishing. These last exercises, which were so necessary for the support of the Northern nations, became of course their chief employment ; and such employment rendered them fierce, hardy, and impatient of restraint ; to which their never living in large villages or towns did not a little contribute. The flesh of such animals as they could take served them for their food, and the skins contributed to their rayment. It is no wonder therefore if Ireland was more coveted and peopled than most other Northern countries ; as no other administered better to this sort of life, as none was richer in the necessaries which were the support of it, such as the fresh and salt-water fisheries, and as none was more removed from the dread of the overbearing and enslaving nations of the continent. This may serve for an epitome of their history in private life ; and as to their public affairs, little more can be related of this last colony, than the names and genealogies of their monarchs, which are in my opinion totally immaterial. The only thing

thing which I can find that deserves any notice, is that their idols were a log of wood, a plowshare, and the sun: and that one of their Monarchs, who had been educated by the widow of the last Belgic Prince, whose name was TAILTE, in honour to her memory instituted the assembly of Tailtean on the first of August every year, for tilts and tournaments like the old Olympic games; which is a day still distinguished by the name of Lughnasa from this LUGHAIÐH King of Ireland. In short the want of letters and arts among them would not permit much to be recorded of them with any certainty. They all spoke dialects of the ancient Celtic, as the names of men and places plainly shew: And this circumstance probably rendered the several invasions of the island the more successful, by a previous concert, through the means of traffic, of the factious and discontented with powerful foreigners. To this we must attribute the easy conquest of the Dannonians by that able and martial colony from Spain; who of all the Celtic nations have made the greatest figure in the history of these Western countries.

Here then we are arrived at the end of the first age, which may be called the fabulous, through which we have wandered, though not implicitly, yet without an absolute unbelief of the latter part of it: And although many things are omitted which are recorded by other writers, yet they appeared to me to be too insignificant, or too ridiculous, to find a place in such history. What is here related and not excepted against, though it is accounted fabulous, may be true; but the other would not admit of that supposition. The succeeding æra upon which we are now entering, is not without its fables neither: And though we have more light to enable us to distinguish them from the truth, yet is dim and uncertain, requires great and fixed attention, and sometimes shines so very feebly as to be scarce discerned at all. I have said this, that the reader may not be disappointed, and expect more entertainment than he can meet with, in following a guide who is himself not very well instructed. A wasteful war of two hundred years, with a Northern barbarous people, and a succeeding anarchy of upwards of three hundred more, caused such destruction to their
archives

archives and public libraries, as hardly any other, but that of the people whose story they conveyed, could equal.

The remains of those records, says Mr. O'CONNOR, like inscriptions on old medals and broken columns, have been so much buried and defaced, and even treated contemptuously by the new inhabitants, that instead of wondering how little is to be found of this nation, which once gave learning to all Europe, we may rather be surprized that a single fragment is left of it. A spirit of curiosity and improvement, and we would hope of candour and impartiality, have of late years brought these fragments from the obscurity in which they lay buried for ages : and the consentient testimony of foreign and domestic writers confirming them, in spite of all our prejudices must convince us, that there are genuine materials for an authentic history of Ireland, of great antiquity, capable of affording instruction and entertainment to the ablest and most inquisitive. For how much soever there may be of fable in the primæval accounts that have been recited, and though the history of the period which is to follow, is allowed to be uncertain as to particulars, for the first seven hundred years, yet there are characters of persons and things engraved so deeply, and so universally agreed about, that without a scepticism which is unwarrantable, it is impossible to reject them. The arrival of these people who subdued the Dannonians, and settled themselves and flourished in this island for almost twelve hundred years, forms a principal epoch in the Irish history; and therefore necessarily points out the conclusion of this book.

T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

I R E L A N D.

B O O K II.

ACCORDING to what hath been observed already in the Introduction to this work, besides some of the old Celtæ or Gauls from Britain, who passed over into Ireland in a very early age of the world, there were also other colonies of Scythians, called Celtiberians, who had peopled Spain and Gaul, and from thence went into the British islands: and though the Irish historians have been very particular in tracing these people to their original descent from JAPHET, from their ancient chronicles, yet it does not appear to me to be the business of this History. Their traditions may probably deserve the attention of antiquaries and criticks, as much as other primæval accounts of ancient kingdoms; for it has been proved that they had

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the use of letters, near as early as the invasion of this Spanish colony, communicated to them by the Phenicians and Egyptians, with whom they had had frequent commerce. But as all nations had a passion for very early and heroic antiquity, such traditions must be read with caution, and with great allowance for this favourite passion.

However supposing them to be ever so accurate and authentic, it does not seem to me to be the business of this History, to give a circumstantial and minute detail—as the Irish writers have done—of the genealogy, employment, travels, and adventures, of the progenitors of this colony before their migration into Ireland. It seems to be sufficient to our purpose here, if we only say from these traditions handed down from their first historians, that the Milesians were the descendents of a long line of heroes, who figured in Egypt, and filled the continent with their military exploits: and that these names are celebrated also in the traditions of other learned nations, which shews that they are not without foundation: and though these accounts have been so obscured by the poetical supplements of their Bards, as to induce the greatest part of our critics to pass by the whole as fabulous, yet by a collation of the Irish chronicles with the oldest writers on the continent, it appears to be a fact, as well ascertained as any fact whatever of such an ancient date, that the Egyptians having made a conquest of Spain, about a thousand years before the Christian æra, and there being a great scarcity of all the products of the earth from a series of dry years, which made it difficult for all the inhabitants to be sustained, a colony of the natives went to Ireland.

It must be observed that this account does not want confirmation from foreign history. But what more than any thing puts the Spanish original of the Irish out of dispute, are the parallel antiquities of other ancient nations confirming those of Ireland; such especially as we are furnished with by the great Sir ISAAC NEWTON, mentioned before. These have been drawn out with accuracy by Mr. O'CONNOR, as bringing an additional and unexpected degree of credit to the Irish history, and which the reader will find in

opposite columns of foreign testimonies, and native Irish [a]. These observations being made, in order to give a weight and authority to our materials, as far as the use which any good writer makes of them, I shall now proceed with the course of the History.

[a] Foreign TESTIMONIES.

- I. An emigrant nation of Iberians, from the borders of the Euxine and Caspian seas, settled anciently in Spain [a].
- II. A colony of Spaniards by the name of Scots settled in Ireland in the fourth age of the world [b].
- III. The Phœnicians who first introduced letters and arts in Europe, had an early commerce with the Iberian Spaniards [c].
- IV. NIL, BELUS, SIHOR, OSIHOR, TOTH, OGMIVS, &c. were famous Egyptian warriors who filled the world with the fame of their exploits [d].
- V. The Egyptian conqueror of Spain got the emphatical name of the Hero of HERCULES [a].
- VI. NIL, SIHOR, OSIHOR, &c. succeeded to the Phœnicians in cultivating and instructing several nations [f].
- VII. In the days of HERCULES, or the Egyptian conqueror of Spain, a great drought is reported to have burdened a great part of the earth [g].
- VIII. The HERCULES, or Hero of Spain is reported to be the son of BELUS [b].

[a] Ruævus ex Appian, ad Æneid lib. Newton Chron. Dubl. edit. p. 10.

[b] Buchan passim. Ware chap. 1. Histor. Dissertat. by Ward, p. 121.

[c] Strabo, lib. iii. Univer. Hist. v. 18. Dub. edit. p. 382, 3.

[d] Newton's Chron. passim.

[e] Newton, ibid.

[f] Newton, ibid.

[g] Newton, p. 98, 231. Ovid. Metam. lib. ii.

[b] Newton, passim.

[a] Native IRISH.

- I. The Iberian Scots, a people bordering on the Euxine sea, were expelled their parent country, and after several adventures settled ultimately in Spain [a].
- II. Kinea Scait—the Scots and the posterity of the Iberian Scots were a colony of Spaniards, who settled in Ireland about a thousand years before CHRIST [b].
- III. The ancient Iberian Scots learned the use of letters on the continent from a celebrated PHENIUS, from whom they took the name of Phœnicians [c].
- IV. NIHWL, BILEUS, SRUO, ASRU, TAIT and OGAMAN, were mighty in Egypt and in several other countries [d].
- V. A great hero famous in Egypt got the name of GOLAMH and Milen-Espaine, i. e. the conqueror or hero of Spain [e].
- VI. NIWL, SRU, ASRU, &c. succeeded to PHENIUS in teaching the use of arts and letters [f].
- VII. The conquest of Spain, together with a drought which happened at the same time, forced the Iberian Scots to flee into Ireland [g].
- VIII. Milea-Espaine, or the hero of Spain was the son of BELEUS [b].

[a] Lebar Gabala, passim. Keating, book 1. passim. Ogygia, p. 66.

[b] Leb. Gab. pass. Ogy. p. 83. Ward, p. 318.

[c] Leb. Gab. pass. Ogy. p. 63, 221, 349. Keat. book 1.

[d] Leb. Gab. ubi sup. passim.

[e] Omnes Hibern.

[f] Leb. Gab. pass. Keating ex Psalts. Cashel, book 1.

[g] Ibid.

[b] Ibid. Ogy. p. 83.

MS.
K^{EATING}.
O^{FLAHER}.
COMERF.
Dissertat.
HOLINGSH.

The old inhabitants of Spain, being made uneasy with the several inroads of the Phœnicians and Egyptians who had invaded and subdued them, and the country becoming unfruitful through frequent droughts, a particular tribe, of the name of BREOGHAN, were determined to seek out another settlement. Besides it is agreed amongst all foreign ancient authors, that the goodness of their climate and their laborious exercises, joined to their plain simple diet, which made them strong and long lived, were the occasion of their multiplying so fast, that they were often obliged to send abroad colonies into other parts of the world. The Irish writers mention a prophecy of one of the Druids of the tribe above named, that they were to settle in a Western island: Whatever might be their motive, it was agreed after some consultations upon this affair, to send ITH, one of their leaders of the Milesian house, a Prince of great valour and experience, and of many excellent qualities, in order to make a discovery whether Ireland, which from many circumstances it appears was not unknown to them, was such a country as might induce them to settle in it, and was sufficient to sustain their people. According to this resolution, a ship being fitted out, and manned with an hundred and fifty chosen soldiers, ITH set sail from Galicia and landed in the north of Ireland. Upon their arrival, they were interrogated by some of the Dannonians who then possessed it, as to their commander and the business on which they came. As they all spake the same Celtic language, the Spaniard, in return for the answer he gave them, demanded the name of the island and of its sovereign chief: and being informed that it was under the government of three brothers, who were then in the north of Ulster disputing about the jewels of their progenitors, he marched to them with a guard of an hundred men, leaving the other fifty to secure the ship.

The usual ceremonies being past at this interview, he told the Irish Princes, that having mistaken his course at sea he was obliged to land in their country, but had no intention of staying in it any longer than was necessary to refit his ship. The three monarchs perceiving him by his conversation to be a man of abilities, agreed to make him their umpire, and refer their dispute to his decision. After a full information from all the parties, ITH awarded the jewels to be divided into three equal portions between them; and observing the country as he passed through it to be very plentiful, he added that if
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the island was thus divided, it might be sufficient to content them, and obviate any quarrels. When he had thus compromised their dispute, had taken his leave, and was returning back to his ship, the brother Kings considering what great encomiums he had passed upon the island, concluded that, if he returned home, he would bring an army back sufficient to take it from them. It was therefore determined, that one of the three should pursue him with a force superior to his, in order to take him prisoner and prevent his return to Spain. The Milesian leader finding himself pursued, and guessing at the occasion, faced about in the rear of his little army ; and though he was wounded in a battle with his pursuer, he made good their retreat to the ship ; in which he died on his passage of the wounds which he had received in that engagement. The body being exposed to his countrymen on the ship's arrival, and the treacherous circumstances of his death related, an expedition to Ireland, in order to revenge it on his cowardly enemies, was immediately resolved upon, and concerted. Nor was their revenge the only motive to this invasion : their ambition and domestic difficulties, which had determined them to send ITH on the discovery of the island and its inhabitants, cooperated with their resentment of his undeserved fate.

Though the English writers of the Irish history give a different relation of this affair, yet I make no difficulty in rejecting it, as it is utterly inconsistent with probability and chronology : And it may not be improper to take this opportunity to inform the reader, that as the Irish writers on the one hand, are very desirous to exalt their antiquities, and the honour, fame, and splendour of their nation ; so on the other hand, the English authors seem all agreed in depreciating the inhabitants, and misrepresenting the transactions which would throw any lustre upon Ireland. They neither of them pay that strict regard to truth and impartiality, which is an essential duty in all historians ; though except in the fabulous age we have gone through, and in the beginning of the succeeding period, the Irish, in my opinion, may be said to deviate much less than the English writers : And yet it is certainly more excusable, to deviate through a regard for our native country, than through a malignant intention of blackening a people, over whom we have got

the dominion. But however in order to come as near the truth as I can in the following work, I think it is the safest way to take the middle course between them ; and what the Irish historians have confessed to the dishonour or the reproach of their own nation, and what the English have allowed which contributes to the glory and reputation of it, we may receive, I believe, without distrust or hesitation.

In reciting the Spanish invasion by the Milesians, I have already said that I prefer the Irish history ; because of the greater consistency with itself, and with probability, and because of the concurrent testimony of all their ancient chronicles. We are there told, that in thirty ships and under forty commanders of great valour, from whom many places in Ireland have obtained their names, the Milesian colony landed on the coast of Ireland ; though not 'till they had been obliged to sail round the island in order to find a place to disembark at. A very natural fog, which the Bards have poetically improv'd into an enchantment of the Dannonians to prevent their descent, made the island resemble a hogsback, the name of which they gave it, and concealed the harbours from the invaders for some time. At last they landed with some difficulty in the West of Munster, and from thence marched in good order to the palace of Teamor, where the three Irish Kings kept their court. The relation of this transaction, as the historians have given it from their Bards, has too much the air of fable to be credited, or to be transcribed into this work.

The fact, when it is stripp'd of this disguise which has obscured it, may be represented in this manner. AMERGIN, one of the principal leaders of this colony, and a son also of the great MILESIVS who was lately dead, addressing himself to the Dannonian Kings, demanded their resignation of the government of the island, or to determine their superiority by a battle ; in revenge of the death of the valiant ITH their countryman and relation, whom these Princes had slain in a treacherous manner against the laws of nations. The Dannonians being surpris'd at this resolute challenge, own'd they were not prepared to decide the quarrel by dint of arms, as they had no standing forces that they could bring instantly into the field : but as they perceived he was a man of

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great authority among his people, and they had an opinion of his candour, they would submit to any other conditions that he would impose. AMERGIN replied to this, that they would all reembark and sail out of the harbour ; and if the Dannonians could hinder their landing, they would return again to Spain, and make no more attempts upon the island ; but if, in defiance of their power, his colony could reland themselves upon the shore, the Dannonians should resign the government and become their tributaries.

These conditions being accepted, the Milesians instantly march'd back, and reembarked : but before they had sailed quite out of the harbour, a violent tempest arose, dispersed their fleet, beat some of them to pieces against the rocks, in which five of the sons of MILESIVS perished, with their people, and had well nigh proved fatal to all the rest. Three of them however survived this dreadful tempest, and with the remainder of their colony, after two bloody actions with the Dannonians, in which their three Princes were slain, entirely vanquished them. Though the Milesians have given, in their written records by their Bards, the whole merit of this rapid conquest to their own skill and valour, yet some of their historians make no doubt of their being joined and assisted by the Belgians who remained in the island ; and who would certainly unite themselves to any invaders in order to be revenged of their old masters. To confirm this conjecture, they tell us that HEREMON, the first Monarch of Ireland of the Milesian race, conferred great privileges on that people ; even granting them the whole province of Connaught, where they grew to be a numerous, martial, and very respectable body, governed by their own laws and provincial sovereigns, 'till even the third century of Christianity. In this manner ended the Dannonian government in this island, after continuing above an hundred and ninety seven years ; and the few who survived the slaughter of the Milesians, either submitted and became incorporated with them, or else, which is more probable as we never hear any more of them, transferred themselves to some other country. From some of the poetical fragments translated in Keating's history, it appears that there is still extant

tant a beautiful description of the battles between the Milesians and the Dannonians ; in which are celebrated the funeral rites that were performed for two of the Spanish Druids who were killed, and the slaughter of the consorts to the three Dannonian Princes. These fragments not only give us a great idea of their poetry, but also shew in what manner all their public transactions were delivered down and registered by their Bards.

HEBER and
HEREMON.

The antiquarians are not agreed in their opinion of the division of the island by **HEBER** and **HEREMON**, the two Milesian Princes, after the conquest of it from the Dannonians ; neither have any of them pretended to explain the reason, why **AMERGIN**, the third surviving son, had no part of the country allotted for his share ; any further than by telling us, that he was a poet, a philosopher, an historian, and a legislator : and perhaps according to the political system of those times, these professions might exclude him from any share in the rule and government of the state. But many such difficulties as these occur, in tracing out all ancient history, which it is impossible to reconcile. The division which seems to be grounded on the best authority, is that **HEBER** possessed himself of the two provinces of Munster ; that Leinster and Connaught fell to the share of **HEREMON** ; and that they apportioned the province of Ulster among their nephews and principal officers in the expedition. The Princes built palaces, and the Chiefs castles — such as they were — on their several estates, where they resided with their families. But their first employment consisted in making room for themselves in a country that was overrun with woods ; and in this they laboured so assiduously, that the names of the Monarchs and great Men who principally promoted it, are mentioned with honour in their histories. The clearing of the land in this manner gave rise to agriculture ; whose vestiges are now to be seen, in some of the most waste and uncultivated parts of the island. If this does not afford a proof of the superior numbers, it is at least a proof of the superior industry, of the ancient inhabitants over the present ; and though the old Milesians had an invincible prejudice against mechanical handicraft occupations, which were carried on by the remaining Belgians or their slaves, yet that agriculture was in high repute and estimation. As

As many changes and divisions were made in the several tribes, through their mutual animosities, and they separated from the possessions that were first assigned them, it is unnecessary, if not absurd, to point out the possessions which belonged to the several families at the first division of the island by the Milesian race. It is sufficient to relate here, that HEREMON and HEBER, the two Princes of the blood, with the consent of their brother AMERGIN, who assumed the dignity of supreme Druid, Bard, Philosopher, and Judge, having divided the kingdom between them, reigned jointly for a year. The former, being possessed of the provinces of Leinster, and Connaught, according to the division above mentioned, built a royal palace in the county of Leitrim; called, in honour of TEA his Queen who had the direction of it, by the name of Teamor, which is now generally pronounced Tara, and will be often mentioned by that name in the following history. But this Monarch erected another royal seat, and kept his court at Airgiodroh in the province of Leinster. What sort of palaces these were, if the reader had not seen in the Introduction, he would easily guess, when he is told, that two of them were built by this Prince, within a year after the conquest of the Dannonians.

In the Milesian expedition to this western island, were a musician and a poet, both of great eminence in their profession; and in so much esteem with the two Princes, that there was a contest to which of them the artists should belong. It was at last however agreed that they should be separated, and the division should be determined by lot, which gave the poet to HEREMON, and the musician to the share of HEBER. Though the writers are not to be credited, which tell us, that the southern parts of the country are from hence observed to be more particularly delighted and skilled in music, yet it is possible that this contest between the Princes in the infancy of their settlement, might give birth, as the old chronicles expressly tell us, to that laudable custom among the Irish, of treating their poets, historians, and men of learning, with honour and liberality.

The controversy for the possession of these famous artists was scarcely amicably adjusted, and the animosities which it had occasioned healed up and forgotten, but another difference arose of a more important nature, and attended

attended with more fatal consequences. Two out of three of the most beautiful and fertile vallies in the island having fallen to the lot of HEBER, and his Queen being a woman of immense pride and vanity, had set her heart upon the third, which lay in the division of HEREMON; that she might be called the Queen of the three vallies. As unreasonable as this might be for her to insist on, she would admit of no excuses from her husband, till he had demanded it of his brother, and in case of refusal attempted it by force of arms. In short, her pride had got so much the better of her, that she passionately vowed she would never rest, till the third valley was added to the possession of HEBER, and she had acquired the title above-mentioned. But if one lady had pride enough to put her upon encroaching on the territories of another, the wife of HEREMON had a spirit which would not suffer her to give way; and she instigated her husband to insist upon his title, and defend his right. Thus determined on both sides, the one to demand and the other not to comply, a war between the Princes became inevitable; and their forces being drawn out on the plains of Geisöl, a desperate battle was fought; in which the army of the aggressor was defeated, and HEBER himself lost his life.

This is a very early instance, it must be owned, of the fatal effects of female pride; and it shews that human nature has in every age of the world been still the same. Here is an example of a woman, yielding to the solicitations of pride and vanity, till they made her turbulent and contentious, unhappy in herself, and uneasy to those about her: here is a Prince her husband, weak enough to sacrifice his repose, his possessions, and even his life to her ambition; and from that day to this, a thousand events of the same fatal kind have happened. For tho' all history is nothing more than the history of the human heart, yet as few read it with a view to that improvement, so it may be said perhaps, that not many are the better for reading history; and the generality want as much to be taught the workings and evasions of the heart, as though they had never been laid before them in any language. The instructions that are to be drawn from this instance before us to both the sexes, tho' very important, are too obvious to be recited.

Though

Though HEREMON had gained a compleat victory over his brother, and reigned from that time monarch of the whole island, yet his government was frequently opposed and interrupted by the friends of HEBER, and he was obliged to take the field. In one of these engagements, about two years after the first, he slew his only surviving brother AMERGIN abovementioned, the sovereign Druid and Philosopher of the island; which probably put an end to the civil war, as we hear of no more insurrections in this reign. The peace of the country being thus established, the historians tell us he divided it among his nephews and chief officers; and particularly that he gave one of the provinces to a commander that was a descendant of the ancient Belgians, as it was said before, and reserved the sovereignty to himself.

HEREMON.
A.M. 2935.

In a short time after this settlement, as it is related in the psalter of Cashell, the Picts of Thrace landed with some forces on the Eastern coast of Ireland; and the reason for their coming thither, we are told, was this. These people being subsidies to the King of Thrace, who had an intention to debauch the daughter of their general, they found means to destroy him; and then leaving the country, and marching through the dominions of several Princes till they came to France, they were kindly entertained in the pay of that monarch, and having a tract of land assigned them they built a city to which they gave the name of Pictavium, and which is now called Poitiers. The King of France being informed, during this transaction, of the uncommon beauty of the daughter of the Pictish General, entertained a design like that of the Thracian Prince, and was at all events determined to possess her. But his intrigue being discovered, and the General incensed at this fresh attempt on his daughter's honour, collecting his people together, and seizing by stratagem on some of the French ships, he put to sea and landed in the harbour of Wexford.

About the time of their arrival here, some of the Britons had made an attempt upon this island, and committed some depredations on the borders of the river Slane. Wherefore the Governor of Leinster, perceiving the Picts to be a valiant and warlike people, gave them a kind reception, and solicited their assistance against the Britons; who made use of poisoned

arrows and other weapons in their attacks. The Bard who relates this, and who knew that a poem subsists by wonder and surprize, has invented a curious story to embellish the narrative, suitable to the ignorance of the times he lived in; but which KEATING and others relate very gravely for true history. They tell us, that this savage custom of the Britons being made known to the Pictish general, he produced a Druid of his train well skilled in physick; who as an antidote against the poison, ordered holes to be dug near the field of battle, into which they should pour the milk of an hundred and fifty white faced cows; and as the Men were wounded with the poisoned weapons they should be bathed in this milk, which would expell the venom and enable them to return to the combat. After such a wonderful assistance as this, it is easy to believe what follows, that the Britons were defeated and driven off the island.

The Picts having been thus useful to their allies, and taking a liking to the country, formed a design of possessing themselves of the Province of Leinster; and there to settle with their families. But this conspiracy being discovered in time to the King of Ireland, HEREMON immediately levied an army much superior to the Picts, in order to oblige them to evacuate the Island without the least delay. Finding their project thus defeated before they could attempt its execution, these new guests were obliged to make their submission to the King. A very pompous speech is put into the mouth of their commander by some of the old writers; and much consultation, they tell us, was had among the Milesians—who are now to be called the Irish—about what was to be done with the Pictish people. At length it was determined to be on several accounts inexpedient that they should remain upon the island; which being notified to them, as also that there were other islands on the north east which were uninhabited, they were desired to pass thither with all convenient speed. To this the Picts very readily consented; but as they were deficient in females of rank, they desired some of the Irish might accompany them to their new settlement; and to engage them they entered into a solemn covenant, that if the government of the country should fall into their hands, the descendants from the female line should have the preference. On this condition,

tion, and with these assurances, three of the Irish widow ladies, with the King's consent, were married to some of their chiefs, and accompanied them in the expedition to the islands bordering upon Scotland, where they settled. The Irish historians quote the testimony of BEDE in confirmation of this account; who says that a nation of the Picts from Scythia, setting to sea in a few long ships, after they had, by the varying of the wind, sailed round the coast of Britain, came at last into Ireland, where they found the nation of the Scots, among whom they desired a settlement, but their request was denied; and that they were persuaded to go to the northern parts of Britain, and obtained wives of the Scots in Ireland."

It must be owned that this is a confirmation of the fact, but not of the time; and in my opinion the historians have placed the incursion of the Picts rather too early. But be this as it may, they certainly were not called by that name till new colonies came over to seek out for habitations. Whether they settled themselves at this time on the north side of the Frith or not, it appears clearly from bishop STILLINGFLEET [b], that these were the people who became afterwards the Caledonian Britons, whose original was from Scythia; who in the time of AGRICOLA were a very considerable people both for number and valour, and who were remarkable in antiquity for painting their bodies. But to proceed now with the history—. The Picts, they tell us, acquired the sovereignty of the country through seventy successive Kings, in the Hebrides, and in the north of Scotland, from this settlement; but that the Druid who had assisted them with his skill against the poison of the British weapons, and five more of note among the Picts, were allowed to remain in Ireland, with estates assigned for their support. The chronicles also relate, that a great number of the descendants of BREOGHAN called Brigantes, and of the Dannonians that still remained in Ireland, were at this time sent away with the Picts to the northern part of Scotland, who afterwards possessed themselves of large settlements in England. This is another proof to me, that the coming of the Picts is placed a great deal earlier than it should be in the Irish histo-

[b] Antiq. of the Brit. churches, p. 243.

ry; because according to BEDE, it was long after this, that any of the Irish "hearing of the goodness of the country of Scotland, either by force or friendship took possession of it." But in matters of such remote antiquity, I am much rather inclined to doubt than to determine,

EITHRIAL.

HEREMON, the first monarch of Ireland, dying after a reign of thirteen years, the crown is said to devolve upon his three sons; who ruling over the island jointly for three years, and one of them then dying, and the other two being slain by the four sons of HEBER, they governed jointly likewise for a year, and were in their turn taken off by a remaining son of HEREMON; who living but ten years after was succeeded by his son EITHRIAL, Monarch of the whole kingdom for twenty years. He is said to have been a Prince, not less remarkable for his learning, than his military accomplishments, and to have written with his own hand the history and adventures of the Milesian colony. He was killed in battle by a son of HEBER, who was the first sole Monarch of Ireland of his family. We hear nothing more of him, though he reigned thirty years, than that he fought five and twenty battles with the line of HEREMON; in every one of which, except the last in which he lost his life, he came off victorious.

TIGHER-
MAS.

A. M. 3011.

His successor who was of the Heremonian line, and whose name was TIGHERMAS, was continually alarmed with the pretensions of the Heber family; with whom it is said he fought seven and twenty battles with great success, in which most of the Heberians were destroyed. Though all the Antiquaries agree that he was the first that introduced idolatry, and erected Pagan altars in the island, at one of which, they say, he perished by a judgment from heaven, with three parts of his people, as he was worshipping his idol, yet they are not agreed about the length of his reign; some assuring us it was fifty, and others but three and twenty years; and some saying there was an interregnum of seven years after his death, and others none at all. Amidst this uncertainty, and in all others relating to the chronology of the history, I am determined, as I said before, by the authority of OFLAHERTY; who declares for the interregnum, and finishes the reign

reign of TIGHERMAS in three and twenty years. Besides many streams which now began first to flow, a gold mine was first discovered in this reign near the river Liffey; the colours of blue and green and purple were invented; and the people began to be more polite in their habits, and to adorn themselves with dress.

At the end of the interregnum, a son of ITH, that was formerly mentioned, assumed the government of the island; and though his reign was determined in four years, by being killed in battle, yet in this time he established it as a law throughout the kingdom, that the quality of every person should be known by the number of colours upon his clothes. Thus a slave or servant was to be seen with no more colours than one; a soldier might have two, but an officer was permitted three; the apparel of gentlemen, who kept a hospitable table for the entertainment of strangers, was to be distinguished by four colours; the nobility were allowed to have five; and the Kings and families of royal blood were not to exceed six. Of the same number might the habit of Scholars, Philosophers, Bards, and Men of learning in all professions, consist. The wisdom of this institution has been much extolled, in producing an emulation among men of letters, and in procuring esteem and respect at a very easy rate. It is indeed to be wondered at, and much lamented, that no institution of this kind—an institution to regulate the dress of the different ranks of people—should have ever found its way into this country in which we live; where, if we were to guess at those we see by their appearance only, we should take the merchant and his family, the squire, and even the tradesman, to be lords and ladies of the first distinction: a piece of impertinence in dress, which creates indecency and confusion, and which a wise state should not tolerate. The Monarch who gave birth to this institution in Ireland, was slain by two descendants of IR, the first royal Milesian who died in the island, who governed in it by turns for forty years; and of whom no more is said, than

ACHYI. [c].

A. M. 3041

[c] The reader is desired to observe that the Monarchs of the same name which are here distinguished by first and second &c. are not as they stand in the old Irish history, but as they appear in this; where the names of several of them are not mentioned.

that

that they were the first Irish princes who came out of Ulster, and divided the kingdom between them.

ACHY. II.

A. M. 3085.

Having been killed as usual in battle by their successor, of the Heberian line, whose name was EOCHAID or ACHY FAOBARGLASS, he enjoyed the crown twenty years. His name is said to be given him from the green colour of his sword and javelins; and he was the first Irish monarch who obliged the Picts that had settled themselves in the highlands and isles of Scotland before mentioned, to pay a tribute or homage to the crown of Ireland. He was much annoyed by the Princes of the Heremonian line; who at length after five battles put an end to his life, and one of them obtained the crown for three and twenty years. At the end of that time, and after fighting four battles, an Heberian dispossessed and killed him; and by a fatality common to the greatest part of them, the son of his predecessor, after allowing him to reign two and twenty years, possessed the throne in the same manner. The name of this Prince was AONGUS OLMUCHACH; who acquired a great deal of military glory over the Picts in the islands and the north of Scotland, whom he reduced into subjection, and obliged them to pay a yearly tribute. After many triumphs over these people abroad, and some pirates and rebellious subjects at home, through a course of eighteen years, he fell in battle by the hands of his successor of the Heberian family, who reigned with great splendour four and twenty years. In order to excite and reward the courage of his soldiers, he caused silver shields and targets to be made, which he distributed without partiality or affection to the most valiant and deserving. But at last he shared the fate of his predecessors; and in this manner they went on through five successive Monarchies, killing and being killed, till the reign of OLLAM FODLAH, without any thing more said of them but their names and genealogies; except that one of them ordained, that the gentry should wear a chain of gold about their necks to distinguish them from the populace; and that he gave helmets, with the collar and fore pieces of gold, as a reward to merit and experience; and that another introduced the wearing of gold rings, which he bestowed upon the learned in arts and sciences.

ANGUS I.

It

It did not appear to me to be a matter of any moment, or entertainment to the reader, to give the names and families of these Princes, in order only to say that they reigned so many years, and then were killed. In the same manner I shall pass by all the rest in whose reign there was nothing memorable; and who were so insignificant in themselves, as to have no more recorded of them in other histories, than that they reigned so many years, fought so many battles, and then died, or were killed. But here I must observe, that at the same time that this barrenness of facts makes the history dry and unentertaining, it yields a proof of its being genuine; it demonstrates how scrupulous all succeeding historians were of adding any thing of their own, where so much room was left for invention and imposition: and though the care and accuracy of these people extended to little more than the succession and genealogies of their Kings, yet it evidently proves the use of letters among them from their first settlement in the island.

Indeed in such an early age of the world as we have gone through, and in a country divided into so many factions, in support of their several leaders of the line of HEBER, HEREMON, IR, and ITH, of all which families there have been Kings, little more could be recorded than how one of them obtained the sovereignty by the slaughter of another. It must be considered that history was then in its infancy; and if a writer gave only a dry narration of facts, without explaining, or attempting to investigate, the causes of the great transactions they recite, it is all that could be expected. The province of history was then principally confined to short meagre annals; and it serves well enough the purposes of those who read it only for amusement; “just as they play a game at cards”, as Lord BOLINGBROKE says, “or as they would read the story of the seven Champions”. If such is the history we have already gone through, or are yet to trace during the remainder of this age, to the age it must be attributed, and not to the nation, or the writer.

However

OLLAM.

A. M. 3236.

However this may be, the reign of OLLAM FODLA, which we are now to enter on, makes a remarkable epocha in the Irish history ; as he was a Prince who excelled greatly all his predecessors in wisdom and learning ; and who laid such a plan for the government and advantage of his people, as few legislators, it is said, exceeded, and few free nations had the happiness of enjoying. The reign of this Monarch, who was of the line of IR, which continued forty years, was distinguished as much by its peaceableness and public quiet, as by the many wise and useful laws which he established for the improvement of his people.

Whether the Israelites in their expedition under the conduct of MOSES out of Egypt, distinguished their tribes by banners, with certain devices or coats of arms distinctly blazoned upon them, as the Irish writers assert, I shall not take upon me to determine. But they tell us, that in imitation of this example, the great ancestor of the Milesians, when he led them out of Egypt, had the device of a dead serpent and the rod of MOSES painted on his banner ; which still continued as an honourable distinction of their family till the present reign. Whatever there may be in this, it is certain that such devices among eminent people and nations were of great antiquity. The shield of ACHILLES mentioned by HOMER, the lion on the shields of ALEXANDER's soldiers, and the images on the arms of many other heroes are a proof of this ; and there is nothing therefore unreasonable in supposing, that the Milesians might have a badge of distinction on their banners and helmets, in order to shew, and to perpetuate the memory of their descent ; as an illustrious family, who made a very early figure in the chronicles of the world.

But OLLAM FODLA considered, that as this general device on the banners of their army was an incentive to their troops to behave with the valour and intrepidity worthy of their great origine, so particular arms, distinguishing each family, might also cause an emulation in the several commanders or at least be a security for their courage. He there-
fore

fore ordered the Heralds, whom he then instituted, to assign a particular coat of arms to every Nobleman, and great officer, according to his merit and quality; whereby each should be distinguished from all others of the same rank, and being curiously blazoned upon his banner, he should be known wherever he was; in order particularly that he might either be rewarded for his courage, or punished for his cowardice in the field of battle. For they were always attended in their marches, as well as in the time of action, by their antiquaries and poets, who were obliged to take notice of the particular behaviour of every officer: and when they saw one distinguish himself against the enemy, his name and exploit was immediately entered into the records of his house, to be transmitted down from father to son; and by that means to inspire the several branches of the family with an emulation to imitate such a great example. Nor was it recorded only in the private anecdotes of the family, but a copy of it was laid before the next assembly at Tara; which was likewise instituted by this monarch.

There was great reason for saying that the reign of this Prince made a remarkable epocha in the Irish history. For there is in no nation a custom attended with circumstances of greater solemnity and magnificence, than was this triennial Parliament or convention ordained by OLLAM FODLA; and of which the reader will excuse therefore a very minute recital. Though the form of their government was monarchical from the beginning, yet it was at all times under the restraint of popular councils. Indeed it was so much under that restraint, that, except in time of war, the real power of their first monarchs was too limited and circumscribed to answer the true ends of government; which consist in restraining popular madness and insolence, without any invasion of popular rights. In order therefore to remedy an evil which was so threatening to the constitution, this monarch contrived a system, that the regal power, in case of necessity, might have some collateral authority to moderate the giddy excesses of the popular, and the popular some equal power to restrain the invasions of the regal. To bring this great end to bear, he instituted a new senatorial order in the state, of the Druids and men of learning; who might throw their authority into the rising scale of go-

vernment between the Princes and the people, and keep the ballance even between these contending powers. Thus the Monarch and the provincial Kings who had the executive power in their hands on the one side, and the philosophers and priests, together with the deputies of the people on the other, formed the whole legislature.

This illustrious assembly was called by the name of Fes Teambrack ; and met by a royal summons in a Parliamentary manner once in three years, at the palace of Tara already mentioned. At this palace the Monarch of Ireland kept his court, as the place of his residence ; but there was also a house assigned for the King of every province in the island, and his retinue, during the sitting of the assembly. Besides these, there were three other houses built for the use of the public ; the first was a strong building in which were confined the prisoners of state ; in the second, the Judges, the Antiquaries, and the Bards assembled, to decide suits at law, impose fines and punishments upon delinquents, and to regulate and adjust the customs of the country : The third, which is said to have been a noble structure, was for the residence of the provincial Queens and their attendants during the Parliament, in which every Princess had a separate apartment magnificently fitted up ; and these courts, as we may well imagine, added much to the gaiety and splendour of the triennial meeting. Before the public business was entered upon, there was a magnificent entertainment for six days together, intended to promote mutual friendship and civility among the principal people of the country ; and where there had been any difference, to reconcile the parties. To this entertainment, not only the nobility and men of learning, but the principal commanders and officers of the army were admitted ; whose names and dates of their commissions were enrolled by the Antiquaries in the royal records, and who took their places according to their quality, their post, and merit, in the following manner.

A large apartment in the palace being fitted up for this purpose, with tables on each side and at the end, and proper spaces for the attendants,

dants, in order to prevent any disputes about precedency, the right hand table was allotted for the provincial Kings, the Princes, and principal gentry; that on the left hand for the officers of the army, and men of lower fortunes; and the other at the end, for the Druids, Bards and men of learning of all professions. When the dinner was ready, and the room cleared of all the waiters, except the grand Marshall, the principal Herald, and a trumpeter, the last sounded his trumpet; at which all the shield-bearers of the Princes and nobility came to the door, and delivered the shields to the grand Marshall; who, by the direction of the Herald, hung them up in their proper places upon the wall on the right side of the long table, and which were distinguished by the coats of arms that were blazoned upon them. At the second blast of the trumpet, the target bearers of the officers of the army attended at the door; whose targets were delivered and hung up in the same manner on the inside of the other table. This ceremony being finished, the trumpet sounded a third time; on which the Kings, the Princes, the nobility, the gentry, the officers, and all the other members entered the room, and took their places under their own shields and targets, without the least confusion or disturbance.

The dinner being ended and every thing relating to it removed, the antiquities of the kingdom were brought before them and examined with the utmost accuracy, lest any falsehoods or interpolations should have been admitted. In this work, a committee of men of the greatest learning were employed; and where they found any misrepresentations, owing either to the ignorance or prejudice of the historians, they were expunged. Those accounts which remained after this inspection, and when they had undergone the approbation of the assembly, were ordered to be transcribed into the authentic chronicles of the kingdom, which were preserved in this palace; and the book wherein they were inserted was called the Register or Psalter of Tara: nor was any relation of antiquities or events, which was repugnant to those recorded in this register, to be deemed of any authority, or any other than a fabulous imposition. In the interval between the session of every such triennial meeting, not only the professed antiquaries appointed by the state, but all other persons of learn-

ing were required to collect with diligence and fidelity whatever was worthy to be recorded in their several districts ; that they might be laid before the next assembly, and if approved of, be transcribed into the public register, for the benefit and information of their descendents.

In this manner, it is said, that the ancient Irish preserved the anecdotes of every public transaction that was of importance enough to be delivered down to the world ; and it was a care perhaps peculiar to these people. The authors who had the insolence to impose upon posterity, either by perverting matters of fact, or representing them in partial and improper colours, to the unmerited reproach of any character, were solemnly degraded from the honour of sitting in that assembly, and subject to such fines as should be adjudged equivalent to their delinquency. Thus thro' fear of disgrace and scandal, of losing their endowments and estates, or of suffering some corporal ignominious punishment, an historian of that age and nation was induced to relate nothing but truth ; at least such an historian, as had the ambition of transmitting his writings to posterity, under the sanction and authority of this great assembly. Had no other historians presumed to relate the transactions of that country, the history of Ireland from this period must have been allowed to be the most authentic of any nation under the sun. But every family of rank and consequence retained a Bard to celebrate and record their actions ; and these were doubtless not so scrupulous as the state historians employed and pensioned by the publick, and who were subject to the authority of the triennial meeting.

Besides the handsome revenues and estates which were assigned to Heralds, Physicians, Harp-players, and Bards, this Monarch ordained that none of these dignities should be conferred on any families that were not illustrious by their descent ; and though they were hereditary, yet the eldest son should not succede of course to the employment and the estate, unless he was also the most accomplished in his profession. As they lived thus without disturbance from worldly cares in the prosecution of their studies, so they were obliged to no dependence, nor service, but in the
way

way of their profession. In the time of war, or of any other public calamity, they were bound to no military attendance nor contribution; their persons were inviolable; and whatever was the common distress, it was accounted sacrilege to seize upon their estates. To these noble encouragements, and the emulation resulting from them, which advanced all the branches of learning to the greatest height it was then capable of, it was probably owing, that Ireland afterwards became the centre of knowledge, and polite and liberal education, to the whole Western world.

The six days entertainment for the assembly being at an end, and the histories and records having been authenticated in the manner abovementioned, the several orders of the legislature met in a parliamentary way. The Monarch sitting on the throne, and the Kings and provincial deputies surrounding it, the laws which had been established were then revised, and, as the exigence of affairs required, were corrected or repealed; new laws which were thought necessary for the better government of the state were then enacted; offenders were punished according to their demerits; disputes between provinces were adjusted; and in short, whatever was thought to redound to the honour or service of the whole island, as a common country, was ordained as a public law. Among others of that sort in this reign, besides those already mentioned, was one to make rapes capital without mercy; in which OLLAM FODLA gave up so much of his prerogative, as to put it out of his power either to pardon or reprieve the criminal: and in order to give the greater weight and dignity to this assembly which he instituted, he ordained that it should be death without redemption, by any means whatever, to strike or assault a member of the convention during the session, or to rob or disturb him by any violence. There are no records to direct us as to the order in which the regulations of this Parliament were voted, nor the time allotted for these debates: we may however conclude, with a late historian, “that in rude ages, when the science of government was extremely imperfect, among a martial people, unacquainted with the arts of peace, strangers to the talents which make a figure in debate, and despising them, Parliaments were not held in the same estimation as at present.” Of this in Ireland, it is only said, that a throne was erected in the middle of a great room
of

of state, on which the Monarch sat with his face towards the East; the King of Leinster opposite to him; the King of Munster on his left hand; the King of Ulster on his right; the King of Connaught behind the throne; and the principal Princes or nobility, ecclesiasticks, military officers, and deputies of each province, near the Kings they belonged to; that the convention was triennial about the beginning of our November; and that the whole assembly made a solemn and very splendid appearance. If the reader should be of opinion that I have been too prolix already in the account which has been given of this convention, it must be observed, that it is an affair of as much importance as any in the whole Irish history, as being the fountain of all their civil polity in after ages; and with regard to the case of their records and public history, that it was worthy of imitation in the politest and most learned nations.

FINNACTA.

A. M. 3276

The great OLLAM FODLA, whose reign of forty years was so happy for his people and so glorious to himself, having finished it, not in the field of battle usual with his predecessors, but by a natural death, the crown devolved upon one of his sons. Though this prince enjoyed it in a peaceable manner twenty years, yet nothing more is transmitted of his reign, than that a great snow covered the whole country; and that he died in the same manner his father had done before him, and was succeeded by one of his brothers. The reign of this second son of OLLAM was distinguished by nothing but a very long season of uncommon health all over the island; and little more is said of him, than that he died in the seventeenth year of his monarchy, without any previous disorder or apparent symptoms of any disease. The third son who succeeded him, and reigned only twelve years, has nothing more related of him than that he was killed in battle by one of his nephews; who, in his turn, was slain by the son of his predecessor, after eight years possession of the crown. In this manner the monarchs of Ireland continued killing and succeeding one another, as before the reign of the good OLLAM, for the space of two hundred sixty three years more to the reign of KIMBATH, during all which time there were only three, out of one and thirty monarchs, who died a natural death. Neither was any thing memorable

recorded

recorded in such a series of faction and civil war, except that a mint having been erected and money coined, a constant pay was then first settled upon the officers and soldiers of the standing army, for which a form of discipline was also established; and that a sort of skiffs or cock-boats were then invented, that were easy to manage, and covered with the skins of beasts; and which are to this day in use in some parts of the island under the name of Curraghs.

The reader will see by this, that the institution of OLLAM FODLA was of no long duration; and if it failed in the very family of him who formed it, there is no wonder that history should fail with it. For civil wars, among other evils, have not only an unhappy influence over the manners of a people, but are the bane of arts and sciences. Thus in fact, the history of Ireland became upon the extinction of the Ollam Fodlian constitution little more than a register of the succession and genealogies of their Kings, 'till the reign of KIMBATH; who by restoring the constitution of the whole kingdom to its pristine firmness, gave history and the sciences such new life and vigour as that, though they were suspended, they were never afterwards extinguished: and indeed from this monarch, the most knowing and impartial antiquarians date the certainty of their historical facts; as the Greeks do theirs from HERODOTUS. This great alteration in the state of public affairs, will properly give a beginning to another book: and from a review of the various revolutions, vicissitudes, and tempests which we have passed through in this, I shall conclude it with an observation, which, though it may do no great honour to the ancestors of the Irish, yet may be of use to their posterity, which is the great end of history.

The observation I mean is this. We have seen in the course of this book, the Milesian race which is so much boasted of, though their country was separated from the rest of the world, and on all sides defended by seas and mountains as a bulwark, yet far exceeding all other nations upon earth in the most unnatural, bloody, and destructive feuds, and their country obnoxious to more frequent and entire revolutions than any other.

other. A review of these things will teach us, that if we expect any security from such calamities, it is necessary that we should cultivate moderation and humility in ourselves, and peace and union with one another. The people of Ireland, in those times of desolation, were wasted with factions and overrun with wickedness of every kind; and for these abominations it pleased God to withdraw his favour, and to give them over as a prey to be devoured of one another. Let us therefore take warning by their example; and whatever the pride of politicians, or the vain boast of those who delight in war may suggest, yet we have seen here enough to convince us, that a nation of libertines can never be the favourites of a righteous Providence, and unless the LORD shall direct them, that vain will be the councils, and unavailing will be the strength of man.



T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

I R E L A N D.

B O O K III.

WHATEVER uncertainties the best and most impartial Antiquarians have discovered, in the historical and chronological accounts of Ireland till the reign of KIMBATH, yet these are not so great, as what are to be met with in the Antiquities of Egypt, Chaldee, Greece, and other nations. Some characters of persons and things were found so deeply engraved, and so universally agreed about, though involved in fable or covered over with fiction, that there was no rejecting them, nor passing them by in silence: Nor indeed have the relations of many of the heroes of antiquity, which we entertain without scruple, any greater or fuller authority for their actions and existence. Amidst all the contentions and civil wars in Ireland, there was such a care and accuracy bestowed in the preservation of their regal genealogies and

VOL. I. Y successions,

KIMBATH.

A. M. 3596.
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successions, as seems peculiar to these people ; and which enabled succeeding writers to be tolerably exact in their calculations. Thus the generations of the Royal Milesian line, which were preserved by their Bards with few or no mistakes, being computed by the chronologers of this reign with the length of the reigns of the preceding Monarchs down to their own time, a wonderful consistency was found between those accounts and the course of nature. Upon this foundation they formed their technical chronology, which, O FLAHERTY has proved in his *Ogygia*, to be the most exact at this day in the world. To the laborious researches of this learned and able writer, who has given a very accurate chronology of the Irish history, I own myself much indebted for this part of my work. But notwithstanding we are now arrived at the period of certainty in the annals of Ireland, yet still they are but annals. As letters were yet in their infancy, and the government unfixed and factious, the time of history was not come ; and little more is to be expected, than a register of their Monarchs, and of the principal events which happened in every reign. With these therefore I shall proceed in the best manner I can, 'till we arrive at an age of more light and knowledge.

According to the records of this time, in which all their historians acquiesce, three of the Princes of Ulster of the line of IR, after many struggles for the Monarchy, agreed at last that each of them should reign successively for one and twenty years, and then resign the government to the next in turn ; and that two of them having enjoyed the crown according to this agreement, KIMBATH succeeded, and reigned the time allotted him with splendour and tranquillity. They tell us that the first of the Kings who should then have assumed the government, being dead without issue male, and having left a daughter, whose name was MACHA, of a robust constitution and an enterprising genius, she claimed the throne in right of her inheritance, before DIATHORBA, the other King, should succede to it a second time. It is added, that the competitors having mustered up all the forces they could procure and engaging in a desperate battle, the Princess obtained the victory ; her
 rival

rival soon after died of grief; and to prevent KIMBATH from giving her any disturbance, that she married him. The reader will see of himself, without my pointing it out to him, that this agreement of the three Princes is not to be reconciled with probability and common sense; and it is astonishing how all their historians can deliver it down, as they do, without the least scruple or hesitation. If any agreement to the purpose mentioned subsisted at all, it must certainly be for one year instead of one and twenty; for what chance could the third, or even the second have for the throne, if each was to possess it one and twenty years? And if we suppose them to be no more than just of age when this agreement was made, which, considering their various contests they tell us of which were prior to it, is the least we can suppose, KIMBATH must then be considerably above fourscore when they marry him to the Queen.

But having said enough to shew the incredibility of this account. I must now observe, that the manuscript in my possession takes no sort of notice of this agreement, and says that MACHA who was a Princess of invincible spirit and intrepidity, being uneasy at DIATHORBA's ascending the throne at the death of her father, resolved, as she had no brother, to inherit it, and unusual as it was in Ireland for a female to hold the scepter, to raise an army and dispossess him. To this end she issued out a summons; and gave commissions, to the principal chiefs who were of her party, to raise all the troops they could; and tho' the Monarch and his five sons were supported by a numerous army well disciplined, that after a desperate engagement they were defeated, and the King himself was slain. Having thus fixed the crown upon her head as the first Queen of Ireland, and given peace to the country for some time, she married KIMBATH, a Prince of her own tribe; to whom she delivered up the command of the army, and with whom she shared the government during his life. There being nothing improbable in this relation, the reader will no doubt give it the preference to the printed histories; to which I shall now return. I shall omit however a strange absurd story which they tell, of a stratagem contrived and executed by the
 Y 2 Queen,

KIMBATH
and MACHA

Queen, in order to get the sons of her rival into her power ; and which I dare say the honest Bard who first related it, intended only as a poetical fiction, to describe the spirit and resolution of this royal heroine.

Besides reviving the regulations of OLLAM FODLA, relating to the care of history and the government of the state, the Monarch KIM-BATH had the glory of building the royal palace of Eamania, of settling the oeconomy of his family province of Ulster, and of restoring the constitution of the whole kingdom. The palace has been already mentioned in the Introduction, and the councils held in it described ; and therefore I shall say no more of it in this place, than that it continued almost seven hundred years, such an example of splendour, greatness, and regular oeconomy—to use the writer's own words—as did the greatest honour to the whole Milesian race. Another author assures us, that the ruins of that celebrated edifice, visible in his time, proclaimed the magnificence storied of it. There was not time for this monarch to carry any more great designs into execution ; having enjoyed the crown only seven years, before death put an end to his life. The Queen held the reins of government then in her own hands the same number of years ; and though she ruled with a spirit and magnificence which made her the terror of her enemies and the delight of all her subjects, yet she was slain at last by her successor, of the line of HEBER ; who at the end of nine years was taken off in his turn by HUGONY the Great, in revenge for the death of MACHA who had been his foster-mother.

HUGONY.

A. M. 3619.

HUGONY was a descendent of the Heremonian family, and had he died without issue, would have been the last and only person of that royal line. This prince who was married to a daughter of France, and wore the crown of Ireland thirty years, was one of the most spirited and enterprizing monarchs that this island ever produced. He not only obliged the Picts to pay the tribute due to his predecessors the Kings of Ireland, but he also enlarged his dominions beyond their former bounds, extending his empire over all the Western isles of Europe. Not content with these foreign acquisitions, he abolished the Pentarchical government ; and required all the Princes and Grandees of the provinces to bind themselves
by

by a solemn oath to him and his posterity, in exclusion of the other lines of the Milesian race.

It is said in the history of this monarch, that he had five and twenty children, and yet left but two behind him; from whom sprung all the latter Heremonian line. In order to remedy some grievances, of which his sons, when they grew up, were the occasion, we are told that he divided the island into five and twenty parts, under this restriction, that every one of his Children should content themselves with the part allotted him; and though it is added that the public taxes were collected for three hundred years according to this division, yet such a division seems too improbable in my opinion to be credited. It is certain however that he abolished the Pentarchical government by a law, and that he intended there should be no more provincial Kings: but whatever effect this law might have in the other provinces, the Court of Eamania, headed by the Kings of Ulster, flourished with as great splendour as ever; during the three hundred years from the abolition of the Pentarchy to its restoration. This great Monarch was slain at last by his brother, and his death revenged upon the murderer by one of his sons, who succeeded him in the throne 'till he was assassinated by his brother also in the following manner.

There being but two sons of HUGONY left behind him, as it has been said, the monarch was very kind and indulgent to his brother, and assigned him a princely revenue; but COBTHACH being a man of boundless ambition could be satisfied with nothing less than the crown and kingdom. However having no prospect of accomplishing his desires, his brother having a son and grandson to inherit after him, he pined so much with grief and vexation, that he had so broke his constitution and impaired his health, as to be thought past all hopes of recovery. The King being informed of the ill state his brother was in, and having a great affection for him, made him a visit. But being attended with his household troops, he was asked the meaning of such a military retinue; which the sick man seemed to resent, as though his fidelity was suspected. The King assured him with great courtesy and kindness, that he had not the least

LOGARY I.

A.M. 3649.

suspicion of his loyalty or affection; and that he was attended thus for no other reason than for the sake of state, and to preserve the dignity of his character: however not to make him uneasy with that circumstance any more, the Monarch added, that in his next visit he would come as a private gentleman without any guard at all: and then took his leave with great tenderness and compassion. The perfidious COBTHACH, says the history, thinking this to be a fair opening for the stroke he had long meditated or wished to strike, but not relying entirely on his own abilities in such an important enterprize, consulted a Druid whom he had in his train about the fittest means for accomplishing his purpose. The Druid, having as much ambition and as little religion as his master, encouraged the project; and after some consultation it was determined, that when the King came next to make a visit to him, the Prince should feign himself to be dead; and being furnished with a poniard under his robe, as the King was lamenting over his body, which from his great affection to his brother they knew he would not fail to do, it would be very easy to stab him. The villainous scheme thus contrived, was accordingly put in execution, and succeeded to their wish.

COBTHACH.

A.M. 3665.

But it was not enough to assassinate the King in order to secure the crown, unless his son and grandson, who might disturb him in the possession, were likewise taken out of the way. There was no difficulty in procuring the former to be murdered, when he had deprived him of the royal power; and there would have been less in killing the child, if his loss of speech and other infirmities, occasioned by a fright into which the usurper put him by his barbarities, had not caused his death to be thought unnecessary. The reader will excuse my stopping here to reflect on the dreadful consequences of a spirit of ambition, when it is suffered to riot in the human heart without any controul. Here is the instance of a man, of good understanding and of high rank, giving way by little and little to the suggestions of this passion, till he was wholly within its power; and for want of the means of its gratification, on the point of falling a sacrifice to it himself. But no sooner was there an appearance of an opportunity for indulging it, than we see this man extinguishing the
sense

sense of good and evil, implanted in the human breast, and having then divested himself of the strongest ties of gratitude and affection, contriving coolly and with deliberation to embrue his hands in the blood of his own brother, at the very time when that brother was giving an unfeigned testimony of his love; and all this complicated guilt being not sufficient to appease the dictates of his passion, we find him adding blood to blood, and one scene of cruelty to another, 'till he becomes a monster in nature, and notwithstanding his success, one who could not be looked upon without abhorrence. This instance will teach us, that it is necessary to our happiness as well as the great security of our virtue—if indeed they could be separated, as they cannot—to preserve the balance of power in the human system; and that no passion should be permitted to exert itself improperly and exact more dominion, than God himself appointed when he gave them all a place in the breast of man. If this instance does no great honour to human nature, yet this reflection may do something towards mending the human mind; which is the business of those who write, and those who study history.

The execrable COBTHACH having thus mounted the throne for which he had languished, possessed it amidst the disturbance and disaffection of his subjects for seventeen years; when he was suddenly attacked from a quarter that he little thought of, and suffered the fate which he justly merited. His brother, as it hath been said, having left a grandson about ten years old, whom the usurper intended likewise to destroy, if the barbarities which he first inflicted upon him, by throwing him into convulsions and depriving him of his speech, had not made his destruction seem unnecessary, this young prince was convey'd away into the west of Munster by his friends; as one whom Providence had reserved to be the proper executioner of this bloody tyrant. It must be owned indeed that the ways of Providence are dark and intricate; and whilst the revolutions of states and kingdoms amaze and confound us, the springs by which they are moved are often secret and imperceptible. But that men should not mistake and challenge that to themselves, which the councils of the Most High only form, and his power only can accomplish, he hath thought fit to let us know, that

that it is He who ruleth over the kingdoms of men, and gives them to whomsoever he pleases. Thus the marks of his almighty wisdom are so visible in the revolutions of some states and nations, that if the eyes of men were not blinded by pride and unbelief, they could not possibly be mistaken in the hand which guides them.

Of this sort was the surprizing turn of affairs brought about by Providence in the event before us. The child who was thought incapable of giving the least disturbance to the usurper, and whose life was spared for that reason only, after being entertained for some time by a friend of his family, the King of Munster, was for very prudential reasons conveyed to the court of France; of which his great grandmother, as the reader may remember, was a descendent. Nine of his friends are said to accompany him in this expedition; who discovering to the French Monarch the circumstances of his birth, and his present miserable situation, the King was so much moved with his misfortunes, that he not only gave him an honourable reception, but also distinguished him with a military command. The use of his speech and all his other faculties having been long restored to him, the Prince shewed himself worthy of the commission he had been honoured with, and of the ancestors from whom he descended. The King, his relation, gave him the command of the French army, in which he signalized himself so much by his courage and good conduct, that his fame was spread abroad into the most distant countries, and of course among the Irish; many of whom resorted to him to avoid the tyranny of the usurper.

Here I must leave the fair track of sound and real history, and deviate for a while into the flowery path of, what I take to be Poetical fiction; whither the reader may follow me, or not, as he is most inclined. The King of Munster, who had concealed and entertained our hero in his youth, had a daughter whose name was MORIAT; and the children being much of the same age, they became play fellows, and contracted a mutual liking and affection for each other. When the fame of his great exploits was carried into Ireland and had reached her ears, the innocent tenderness she had entertained for MAON in the days of their youth and play, returned strong upon her,

her, and possessed her soul. The ripeness which nature had given to her affections improved this tenderness into a love, against which it was not in her power to make resistance; and perhaps she would not resist it if she could. Never was the name of prince MAON mentioned with any honour, but the breast of the lovely MORIAT throbbed with an emotion that she could not suppress; and her cheeks glowed with a flame they were not accustomed to. This situation was too uneasy to be long endured without some redress; but the difficulty was how to procure it. She was a young lady in the court of her father the King of Munster, and the Prince was at the head of the army in France: if it appeared impracticable for her, to steal away and ramble thither incognito in order to throw herself in his way, it seemed no less improbable, that MAON should leave his power and grandeur acquired in France, to come to Ireland as a private gentleman; and yet, without their meeting together, it was certain that her uneasiness was without a remedy. In the agony of mind arising from this perplexity, and which I apprehend is much more clearly conceived than well expressed, as being perhaps the only agony attended with any pleasure—she fell at last upon an expedient which seemed to promise success.

The passion of love is not only very fruitful of invention, but also exercises talents, if it does not give them, which would never have been thought of without it; and especially the talent of versification. Thus whether this young Princess ever invoked the Muses before or no, she now composed a poem in praise of the heroic actions of MAON; and having procured a celebrated musician to set and sing it to the harp, she prevailed upon him to go to France, and carry a letter, and a present of jewels, from her to the general. The contents of the letter are to be guessed at; but no sooner had the bearer got access, delivered his credentials, and sung the poetry which accompanied them to the harp, than MAON was inspired with the resolution of prosecuting his claim to the crown of Ireland. He had too good an interest in the King of France to make any doubt of his assistance in the recovery of his right, and therefore communicated his design to him without any delay. The King being convinced of the justice of his pretensions, granted him an aid of two thousand two hundred men, and a proper fleet to trans-

port them. With these forces and with the aid of the Irish gentry who had fled into France for his protection, the Prince arrived in the harbour of Wexford; and there receiving intelligence of the place of residence of the usurper, he directed his march directly thither. The secrecy and the expedition with which this march was conducted, gave no time to the Irish monarch, either to put himself in a posture of defence, or to escape his enemy by flight. Taken therefore by this surprize, he was killed by the Prince in his own court; and all his favourites and attendants perished with him.

LABRA.

A. M. 3682.

It is not from any great improbability in the circumstances of this story, that I have given it the name of a poetical fiction: but knowing how apt they were in those days to enliven the records which were in verse, with some touches that might give delight and wonder, which are the soul of poetry, I suspect this to be more of novel than history. It must be owned however that the event does not seem to require so remarkable an interposition to bring it about; nor is there any absurdity in supposing, that his own situation of power and skill in arms, the hatred amidst which his rival possessed the throne, and the suggestions of the Irish who lived in exile with him, might any of them be sufficient to instigate a valiant and youthful Prince to vindicate his right. Nay it seems to me a little absurd, that none of these things should move him, till he was called upon by the voice of love, to ascend the throne of his forefathers, of which he had been deprived by a tyrant and assassin. But, after all, it matters little, whether we suppose it to be real or fictitious history: because if only the latter, it serves to take the mind off from a scene of horror, and to give it a cast of pleasantry in its stead; and therefore does not improperly fill a place in grave historic pages, such as these. Be all this as it may—When MAON, who was afterwards called LABRA LONGSEACH, had destroyed the usurper, and fixed himself in the peaceable possession of the government, he made addresses to MORIAT the Princess of Munster, with whom he had lived for some time in his youth; and who according to the foregoing story had generously made him an offer of her love, and first inspired him with a resolution to attempt the inheritance of the crown. This offer was too agreeable to the father as well as the daughter to be refused; and the treaty was concluded by a solemn marriage quickly after.

Whatever

Whatever we may determine as to the love tale that has been related, whether a real fact, or a fictitious embellishment of MAON's return to Ireland to assert his right, there can be no doubt as to a fable which is to be met with in the Irish manuscripts relating to this reign, which I come now to recite. But I must first beg leave to observe, that fables of this nature are so far from being a mark of forged or false history—as We in this country have been always apt to consider it with regard to Ireland—that they are, on the other hand, an irrefragable proof of its high antiquity, and of the very early use of letters in that nation. For besides that fables are not mere fictions, as the learned know, it is certain that they were in use in the primitive times, and in no other; and all of them almost had some relation to history, or were connected with events of undoubted authenticity. The fable relating to LABRA LONGSEACH is as follows. The ears of this monarch being so immoderately long as to resemble the ears of a horse, in order to conceal this deformity from the knowledge of his subjects and to preserve him from their contempt, whenever it was necessary to cut his hair, which was generally once a year, the operator was always instantly put to death. Instead therefore of an emulation for an employment that was about the person of the King, it became in a few years avoided as much as possible, and the hair cutter was obliged to be determined by lot.

It happened once that this lot fell upon a deserving young man, the son of a poor widow who had no other child. The mother, apprehending the death of her son according to custom, was overwhelmed with grief; and finding no other remedy she applied herself to the King, and intreated his mercy to spare the life of her only child upon whom her all depended. The King being moved with her great affliction, and thinking it unreasonable to order a new decision, consented to spare his life; but on this express condition, that the hair cutter should never divulge a secret that would be committed to him, nor reveal any particular circumstance that he should observe. The widow thought these terms were very favourable; and the artist joyfully consenting to them, the King's hair was cut: but when his long ears were discovered, the secret which the operator had promised to conceal on pain of death became visible to

him, and though he was much surprized at the sight yet he took no notice. The burden however of so great a secret was too heavy for him; and what between the extreme desire he had to disclose it, and the fear of being put to death if he did, the poor man languished and pined so much, that his life was in danger even from thence. The widow seeing her son in this miserable condition, applied to a neighbouring Druid, eminent for his skill in physick, for some advice; who soon discovered, when he saw the patient, that his illness did not proceed from any disease. The young man being therefore examined by the Druid, confessed that the art of physick was ineffectual in his case, which required only to be disburthened of an important secret, which then oppressed him: but as death was to be the consequence of such a discovery, the remedy was full as bad as the disease; and the apprehension of death in either way—for concealing it would kill him—was the sole occasion of his present malady.

When the Druid had revolved these circumstances in his mind, he contrived a method by way of remedy between the two extremes, which might produce the desired effect. Observing then to the young man, that though he was under an obligation not to reveal the secret entrusted with him, to any one living, yet that this did not prevent his divulging it to the air or things inanimate, he advised him to go to a neighbouring wood; and when he came to a cross way that he would find in it, to turn to the right hand, and the first tree he came to, putting his lips close to it, to whisper the secret. The patient was rejoiced with such an easy remedy; and immediately pursuing the Druid's advice, he delivered himself of the burden which he had so long laboured with to a willow tree, and found immediate ease. Soon after this it happened, that the harp of the King's musician being broken, and the artist coming to this wood to furnish himself with another, accidentally fell'd the tree to which the important secret had been disclosed. When a harp was fashioned from it, and strung and put into order, the musician, to his great amazement, could not possibly give it any other sound than that "LABRA LONGSEACH has the two ears of a horse". The fame of this wonderful instrument being immediately spread abroad, the King ordered several musicians to touch it, but none of them could give it any other expression. His Majesty was so
much

much astonished at this miracle, that he was persuaded the Gods had ordered it in resentment of his cruelty in putting so many people to death, in order only to conceal a deformity from his subjects; and this conviction made him relent of his barbarity, and expose his long ears during the remainder of his life.

The reader has now before him the whole fable, as it is given in the Irish histories from some of their most antient and authentic manuscripts. As there is no doubt but it has a reference to a very remarkable transaction in the reign of LABRA, so at this distance of time, and for want of knowing more particulars of his history than are handed down to us, it is impossible to give a thorough explication of it in all its parts, and to shew every thing which lies hid under this disguise. For it has been proved by the Abbe BANIER, in his Mythology and fables of the ancients, that as every nation had fictions of its own, which were the productions of human fancy, that had always a bias towards the marvellous, so they contain a part of the history of primitive times in every nation; and that neither the allegory nor moral were the primary intention of those who invented them. In this case however, it being in vain for us to look for the former, for the reasons just now mentioned, we must content ourselves with the latter. As the learned are not agreed, whether ascribing asses ears to MIDAS, was on account of his stupidity, or his exquisite sense of hearing, or because he kept spies through all his dominions and therefore heard at a great distance, so I shall not presume to assign a reason, why the Irish Monarch was complimented with the ears of a horse. The circumstances of the two fables are very similar; and as all authors are agreed, that the fable relating to the Phrygian king is founded upon history, it must be extreme prejudice or weakness not to conclude so of the other. In point of ornament it must be allowed, that the Irish fable has the superiority: it has more incidents to interest and catch the attention of the reader; and the marvellous part, which is to surprize, surprizes us more agreeably. The whole fable of the ears of MIDAS, it is well known, is that he took care to conceal under a Phrygian bonnet this dishonourable deformity; and his barber who had discovered it, but durst not speak of it, imparted the secret to the earth, whence

whence reeds sprung up which spread it abroad. Whatever might be the particular history on which both the fables were founded, it is no difficult matter to find out their moral. Our business is only with that, which relates to LABRA LONGSEACH; and as it has more incidents in it, so the moral is more extensive than the other. It not only teaches us, that as deformity in persons of the most illustrious rank is obnoxious to the contempt and ridicule of the multitude, though very unreasonably, so it is always concealed as much as possible; but we may learn also from it, that an important secret entrusted to people of low and little minds is too powerful a temptation to be resisted; and when it has once escaped the breast, though where we believed it may be confided with the utmost safety, it is divulged abroad in a manner that we little thought of. This is the lesson to be drawn from the foregoing fable; and if it teaches us nothing more, yet I presume it will be allowed, that it was not unworthy of a place in such a work as this. But I shall now return to the history.

Nothing more is related of this valiant and able Monarch, than that after a prudent reign of fourteen years he fell by the sword of a son of his predecessor. Indeed from this time, through a series of above two hundred and twenty years, we find almost nothing recorded but the succession and genealogies of their Kings; two of which only died a natural death, and all the others, as usual, killing their predecessors, and being slain by those that succeeded them.

ANGUS II.

A. M. 3786.

However that I may not omit the little that is handed down, I must inform the reader, that one of these Monarchs of the Heremonian line, descended from HUGONY, whose name was ANGUS TURMY, and who reigned above thirty years with great lustre, when he was overcome once with wine, committed incest with his daughter; which occasioned in him so much shame and remorse, that he could never afterwards bear to be seen in publick. But if the whole account we have of him is true, he added a deliberate act of wickedness in his sober senses, which had not surprize and incapacity to palliate or excuse it. The fact I allude to was this: A son being born to him as the fruit of his incestuous commerce, he ordered him to be

put in a boat furnished with mantles and jewels suitable to his extraction, and sufficient to defray the expence of his maintenance and education, if he should find more mercy from providence than his unnatural parent had shewn him; and the boat to be put to sea. It happened however that it was soon discovered by some fishermen; who taking out the infant, with what belonged to it, became its fosterers, giving him the name of FIACHA FERMARA, that is the seaman: and from the posterity of this child, thus exposed to almost certain destruction either by famine or the waters—so amazing and powerful are the works of providence—came the royal line of Scotland: the progenitors on the British side of our own illustrious Monarch.

The son of this FIACHA lived in the province of Ulster; where by his own virtues, and the extensive power of his family, he obtained a considerable settlement: and DEGAD his grandson was so much the object of jealousy to the Irian race, to whom that province had belonged from the invasion of the Milesians to this time, that nothing less than his expulsion would content them. He was a prince of the greatest abilities of the age he lived in; and he was so far from losing any thing by this opposition, that the malice of his enemies, as it often happens, served him more than their friendship. He retired into Munster to the protection of DUACH then King of Ireland, and who had formerly been his pupil. No reception, it is said, was ever more noble. So greatly was the Monarch affected with the misfortunes, and so charmed with the ability and conversation of his guest, once the guardian of his youth, that he heaped honours on him without measure. In short he made him so much his friend and confidant in all the private and political affairs of his life, that his name in history is never mentioned without the addition of DALTA DEGAD, that is, the foster father of DEGAD. It was not long after he had procured for him a considerable territory in Munster, that DUACH himself was slain; but he left DEGAD possessed so much of the affections of the people of that province, that by an extraordinary act which contravened the Hugonian law, they elected him King of both the Munsters; an honour which no one Prince, even of the Heberian line, had ever before enjoyed. The family of this Prince became so popular, on the score of their prudence, justice, and oeconomy, that they flourished with the greatest splendour in that province; and in the sequel we shall find them
arriving

arriving at the highest honours, in filling the Monarchy of Scotland as well as Ireland.

ACHY III.

A.M. 3922.

The course of the history has brought us now to the reign of ACHY FEYLOCH; who restored the Pentarchical government that was abolished by HUGONY, as it has been related, three hundred years before. But though he restored the government of the Provinces by Kings, yet he did not restore the constitution in their election, but appointed them himself; and at first he divided Connaught into three parts or portions. Two however of the petty princes whom he had fixed there, refusing soon after to permit him to erect a royal palace for his residence in their territories, and the third making him an offer of any part of the country allotted for his share, the Monarch was so pleased with his complaisance, that he gave him his daughter MEABA, a beautiful lady, in marriage; and as he became further acquainted with the Prince's accomplishments, he admitted him into his councils, and advanced him to the office of prime minister. Nor was this all the favour which the King conferred upon him. The two other Princes that had refused him a palace having thus disobliged him, he gave to TINNE his son in law the sovereignty of the whole province of Connaught; who soon slew one, and dispossessed the other rival. The peace and government of the province being thus established, a royal palace was built according to the King's intention, called Ruth Cruachain; where the public councils were held for the better regulation of the police of the island, in the same manner as at Eamania. The King of Connaught having reigned over that province for several years with great prudence and reputation, MEABA his Queen succeeded him in that command; and continuing a widow for ten years, married then to OILILI MORE of a noble house in Leinster, by whom she had seven sons. If the historians are to be credited she lived eighty years with this husband, and eight years more a widow after his death; during which time she was got with child by FERGUS a chief of the province of Ulster, and had three boys at a birth, from whom many families of great distinction derived their origine.

Notwithstanding this is delivered for true history by KEATING, yet the reader will discern, without my assistance, that it must be a great mistake.

For

For as we are told that she was married first to TINNE who lived many years, that she was a widow ten years before she took OILILL for her husband with whom she lived eighty years, and that in her second widowhood she was got with child by FERGUS, it will appear that she must have been, at the lowest computation, above a hundred years of age. This is not only a little of the latest for such a frolick and such fruitfulness, but it is also repugnant to another part of the history; in which we are told by the same writer, that FERGUS was killed by the order of OILILL in a fit of jealousy. The story indeed is somewhat odd, but it is much more worthy of credit, than that MEABA should play the strumpet, and bring forth three boys at a birth, when she was above a hundred and twenty years of age. But her cohabitation with OILILL for eighty years, is an evident anachronism with other events that are recorded; and it is not unlikely that FERGUS's familiarity with her was when her husband advanced in years: and so indeed my manuscript has it. However according to O FLAHERTY, she stipulated with OILILL before marriage, that he should not be jealous but bear it without any concern, if on account of her former continence in her widowhood, she should at anytime take the liberty to violate his bed; and therefore openly admitted FERGUS to it. But not to dwell any longer upon this circumstance, which scarce admits of one's being serious, it must be observed that the time in which this princess lived, was distinguished with as many valiant and heroic actions as are to be found in any period of the Irish history.

To give a particular account of all the military exploits and achievements of the champions of those times, it is said, would require volumes; and they may be seen by those who understand the language, in many manuscripts of authenticity which are still preserved. Indeed to confess the truth, I think it would be too great a trespass on the time and patience of the reader, if I was to transfer into this work all the relations that are handed down of these distinguished heroes; whose fame for the most part is alive among the Irish at this day. It may be thought however perhaps not impartial to pass them all over in silence; and that a great deal of the glory of their ancient history will be diminished by such a neglect. That I may avoid this censure, which would hurt me more than to be thought injudicious, I shall proceed

with those accounts which are more immediately connected with the transactions of this reign; tho' most of them are embellished with such poetical fictions of probability, as makes it very difficult as well to disentangle them so as to relate nothing but truth, as to determine what to relate, and what to pass over in silence.

At the time when MEABA was Queen of Connaught, CONNOR the son of NESSA, distinguished always by that title, who was King of Ulster, though said by the Irish writers to be "one of the wisest and worthiest Princes that Ireland ever produced," was yet guilty of the most flagrant act of treachery and breach of faith that was ever recorded in any history. Some of the chiefs of his province, who had been securities for his honour, were so incensed at his perfidy, that they took up arms against him, and advanced towards his palace of Eamania in order to give him battle. The King opposed them with all the forces he could get together; but being defeated with great loss was obliged to save himself by a retreat. The victors, in consequence of their success, plundered the palace, and put all they met to the sword; without even sparing the ladies of the Seraglio whom CONNOR kept for his own pleasure. When they had sated their fury, and considered coolly of what they had done, they were easily convinced that the King would soon be in a condition to revenge himself very powerfully; and therefore they marched away into the province of Connaught, and put themselves under the protection of Queen MEABA. The Queen received them very kindly; but not content with their situation, and though they had no quarrel against any but the King himself, yet they frequently sent strong detachments by night to burn and ravage the country: and indeed they harassed it with such hostilities, that the inhabitants, and the fruits, and provisions of the whole province, were in a manner destroyed by fire and sword. These incursions, which were seconded by the men of Connaught for the sake of the plunder, produced a war between the provinces, which lasted with different success, and with some intermissions, for seven years. The Reader will not expect an account of the miseries which these commotions were attended with, though many volumes, it is said, have been written of them.

It must be confessed, that this was a period of great military renown in the Irish history. For here were three principal tribes or orders of knights-

at that time, who were not only accounted the greatest men of the age by their own provinces, but were so confessed by all the nations of the western world. We are told that their valour, their strength, and the largeness of their stature, were the wonder of foreign countries; and that their exploits are not to be paralleled in history. The first tribe of these warriors was called the Knights of the Red Branch, and were under the command of CONNOR King of Ulster. The second order belonged to the province of Connaught, under the conduct of OILILL FINN, the principal general of Queen MEABA. The third consisted of a family of hereditary courage, descended from DEGAD abovementioned, under the command of CONRY the son of DAIRE, who had their residence in Munster. It was one of the principal customs of the ancient Irish to train up their youth to a military life; that they might either defend their country in a time of distress, or become formidable abroad: and in order to excite their valour, and to inspire them with heroic and warlike sentiments, it was established as a rule, that whoever came off the victor in single combat, should be distinguished with the spoils of the vanquished, as a trophy and a testimony of his bravery. Among other trophies of this kind, it was usual to take out the brains of the adversary who had been killed; and by mixing them with lime, and with the blood, and drying them in the sun, they became as hard as stone. These were always produced at public meetings and conventions, as an honourable distinction of the person to whom they belonged, and as a proof of his valour and certain victory. Adjoining to the royal palace of Eamania where the Kings of Ulster kept their court, there was a lodge appropriated to the tribe of the Red Branch; where the champions of that order deposited their arms, and the honourable spoils they had taken in battle from their enemies,

A ball of the brains of MESGEDRA, a celebrated soldier killed by one of these champions in a trial of skill, was laid up in this house of arms; not only to secure it as a noble badge to the conqueror, but against the fatal effects of a prediction, that it would some time or other revenge upon the men of Ulster, the indignities which the great warrior, whose brains they were, had suffered from them. These sort of predictions were very frequent among

their Druids ; and in that age of ignorance and superstition were much regarded. Notwithstanding all their care to preserve a ball which was to have such terrible consequences in the province, there being at that time two fools in the court of CONNOR who had seen it, and liking it for a plaything, they stole it undiscovered ; and going to some distance from the palace, tossed it about from one to the other as a common ball. At this time it happened, as the historians tell us, that CEAT a champion of the second order belonging to the province of Connaught, passing by, spied the fools at their diversion ; and immediately discovering it to be a ball of brains, he found means to get it from them, and carried it home to his own province. Upon a consultation with some of his own people about this military trophy, it was conjectured that these were once the brains of the great MESGEDRA ; and the prophecy relating to them being well known and as well confided in, the champion who had obtained it of the fools always wore it about him, that he might be able to fulfill the prediction. In those days the sling was an instrument of war in great use ; and many were as expert in the exercise of it at hitting a mark, as we are now with a musket. I have already mentioned the frequent hostilities between the two provinces of Ulster and Connaught ; and therefore it was not long before CEAT had an opportunity to make trial of the effects of his new weapon.

The forces on both sides were drawn out for a decisive battle, in order to put an end to the mutual depredations which destroyed the provinces. But as the Connaught general was apprehensive that his army was not a match for that of CONNOR, he contrived a stratagem to destroy him without fighting. Many of the principal ladies of Connaught being at that time on the top of a hill, in order to view the two armies and wait the event of the battle, they were requested to send a messenger to the King, as having something of great importance to say to him ; and who had no danger to apprehend from any of them. The King being a man of gallantry, and seeing nobody but women, fell into the snare. But though he trusted to the honour of the ladies and went up to them without attendants, yet he soon found that they had deceived him ; and perceiving CEAT in their company, he retreated towards his forces faster than he came. The champion had got the ball of brains ready in his sling to discharge at the the King of Ulster ;

ster; and when he saw his treachery was detected by CONNOR's flight, he pursued him till he came near enough to take his aim and discharge his ball; which hitting the King's head made a terrible fracture, just as some of his guards, who had seen him pursued, were coming up to his relief; from whom it was with difficulty that CEAT escaped by flight. This stratagem carries with it so severe a reflection on the honour of the Connaught ladies as well as of this famous warrior, that it secures it from the suspicion, which I must own I should otherwise entertain, of its being a fiction of the bard to embellish his history. But I shall leave the reader to his own judgment of the matter.

The ball having made a fracture of a very dangerous consequence, and rendered the King senseless, his surgeon required the consent of the great officers who were attending him, to the operation that he thought necessary to preserve his majesty's life; because it was possible he might die under his hands. One would imagine from this circumstance, that the use of the trephine was then known in surgery; but however this might be, the officers considering that a desperate case requires a desperate remedy, and that the peace and happiness of the province depended on the life of CONNOR, they consented to his proposal. The care and skill of the surgeon in a short time restored the King to his speech and senses; and though the fracture was cured in a great degree, yet the wound had had that effect upon the brain, as, upon any violent passion or heat of spirits, it would be in danger of breaking out again; and a relapse might be attended with very fatal consequences. Therefore the surgeon very honestly and very wisely advised his Majesty to avoid all immoderate exercises that might put his blood into a ferment; particularly not to ride hard, and to be in any respect incontinent, but to keep himself always temperate and cool. The King had understanding enough to see the propriety and importance of this advice, and prudence enough for seven years to follow it. Though the artifice by which he received this fatal wound does no honour to those who contrived or assisted in it, as I have said, yet it must be owned that the notorious perfidy which this King was guilty of, in ordering three chiefs to be assassinated, to whom he had given hostages and safe conduct, made his own fate through treachery to be less lamented.

mented. It gave a fair opening to weak and superstitious people, to account it to be a just and public judgment from heaven as a punishment for that perfidy: but among those who believe another state of retribution, it is very rash and inconsiderate, if no worse, to make free in this manner with the ways of Providence. Notwithstanding the temptation which direct and apparent circumstances may carry in them to influence our judgment of such events, yet it is safest and best, to leave them all to Him, who does whatever pleases him among the inhabitants of the earth.

The Philosophers, whom they called the Fileahs and were likewise their Bards and Poets, having engrossed the learning and corrupted the law of the country, and the good which society had a right to from both being thus defeated, the popular fury at length was raised, and poured down upon them like a torrent. In this, as in most similar cases, violence knew no bounds; but good and bad were swept before it without any discrimination. The abuse of things being confounded with the just and temperate use of them, the people of Leinster and both the Munsters, in the height of their rage would hear of no accommodation: All salutary reformations were proposed in vain; and nothing but the banishment of all the Fileahs, an order without which the state could not subsist, would appease their resentment. “Indeed the considerations which regulate popular opinions are seldom free from interest or passion; and never, or almost never, reach farther than the present time. Those among them who judge best are themselves deceived by their own sense of interest; and seem one by one to have determined, though they will not confess, and perhaps do not know it, to procure their own satisfaction, without any care about the public, or the future.” The reader is obliged for this observation to the Duke de SULLY, who saw it verified in his time in France: it was verified in the event we are relating in the Irish history many ages ago; and I wish I could not add, that it is almost every day verifying in the country in which I write. If this shews us that human nature has been the same in all ages since the creation of the world, which every body seems to know, it will also shew us another thing, which nobody seems to know, that the voice of the people, is not the
voice

voice of GOD, but for the most part the voice of delusion ; which is prompted by those who have interests or passions of their own to gratify. This was exactly the case at that time in Ireland. Because most of the Fileahs in their judicial capacity, had invaded private property instead of protecting it by law, therefore the whole order, good and bad, were to be extirpated; that some might fill the places from which those were to be dismissed, and others might gratify their revenge for private and personal injuries.

In this distress the Fileahs found no protection but in the court of CONNOR the King of Ulster ; who is eminently distinguished in the ancient records of Ireland as a very able and accomplished Prince. His understanding however was too good to be imposed upon with sounds and shadows of patriotism, or to be run away with by popular clamour ; and wisely considering the danger with which so desperate a cure was attended, he attempted, and at last effected a reformation to the satisfaction of the whole Island. However corrupt the Fileahs in general might have been, yet even at this time there were men of great integrity and capacity of their number ; and it would have been very wonderful if there had not. For as every bard of the first order retained as a mark of distinction thirty others of lower rank as his attendants, and every second bard retained fifteen, the whole body amounted to near a thousand. They were not only the lawyers of the people, but their poets, philosophers, and historians. In this disgrace, the best and wisest amongst them had recourse to the King of Ulster, as a patron of the learned, and a particular friend to their profession. Some of these were the descendants of the celebrated DEGAD before mentioned ; whom CONNOR employed in reducing the whole body of the laws to intelligible and simple rules ; and in giving such determination in all possible cases as enabled every man of common sense and learning to be a tolerable judge of his own. By these prudent regulations, and by the interposition of the King of Ulster, the lawyers were admitted again into credit, upon trial for seven years ; and from the terror of their late intended expulsion they were easily induced to practise on the principles of their original institution. The laws being at this time reduced into axioms, which were thought to be compiled with so much wisdom and equity as to receive the approbation of heaven, acquired the
name:

name of "Celestial Judgments;" and for many succeeding ages no nation was happier in the compiling or execution of laws than this.

The Queen of Connaught, having countenanced and assisted the men of Ulster in their incursions, became an object of resentment at the court of CONNOR. Not content however with carrying hostilities into her province, and opposing her armies in the field of battle, a son of the King of Ulster, and of a mean ignoble ungenerous disposition, forgetting what was due to his royal birth, what was due to the hero, and even what manhood required of him, degraded himself so low as to become the assassin of an old helpless woman. This great Queen, it seems, took much delight in swimming; and her palace being situated on the banks of a fine lake, she used to retire thither in the summer mornings to refresh and divert herself with bathing. A custom of this kind could not be kept a secret; and it being known among others to the Prince of Ulster, he contrived a scheme for her destruction. But not being then expert enough in the art of slinging, he measured with a line the exact distance from one side of the lake to the other, and returned home undiscovered. Being thus master of the breadth of the lake where the Queen entered, he set up two stakes at the same distance from each other; and placing an apple on the top of one of them, and standing at the other, he practised throwing a stone at it with a sling so long as to be able always to hit the mark. Having arrived at this dexterity, his next business was to procure an opportunity of using it against the Queen, which soon presented itself.

A conference having been agreed upon between the provinces, in order to accommodate some of their differences, at which this Prince was to assist on the part of Ulster; and the place of meeting being appointed, probably by his contrivance, near the lake abovementioned, he took his stand one morning unperceived; and as MEABA entered the water, he struck her full in the forehead with a stone from his sling, which stunned, and sunk her instantly to the bottom. After such an ignominious insidious manner died this great heroic Queen, far advanced in years, by the base and cowardly hand of a young prince. She had had her failings, it must be owned; but they were failings that entitled her to the protection of a man of gallantry, instead of making

making her obnoxious to such a hellish rage; and separate from those failings, she displayed accomplishments and virtues, which equal her to the greatest heroines of antiquity. If it was proper to acquaint the reader of the death of this illustrious Queen, who had made so great a figure on the public stage, on account of her valour, her gaiety, her generosity, and manly sense, it seemed necessary to relate the particular circumstances attending it; in order to shew to what lengths of meanness, infamy, and wickedness, political resentments alone will carry men of the highest rank and education, when they are not under the controul of good sense and virtue.

Whatever were the great accomplishments and the merit of CONNOR King of Ulster, and which have distinguished his name in all the ancient records of the kingdom, yet he was far from being a happy man either in his family or himself. One of his sons, as we have seen, divested himself of all sense of glory and of goodness, and took great pains for many days in order to qualify himself to be the cowardly murderer of his own aunt, just dropping into her grave, who had been a Queen of great renown. One of his daughters was so much beloved by the King of Leinster, that instead of requiring any dower with her, he made over a considerable part of his own dominions to her father in order to obtain her in marriage. But the lady, tho' she consented to this aggrandizement of her family, and gave her hand to the Prince who was so much enamoured of her, yet had very little regard to her own honour, and her husband's happiness: for in a short time after her marriage, she went off with a galant, an officer in her father's army, to whom she had before given her heart. As to CONNOR himself, to say nothing of the breach of faith abovementioned, he tarnished all his glory in a fit of drunkenness, by committing incest with his mother, whom he got with child. Though he observed the surgeon's directions for seven years after the fracture of his skull, yet at the end of that term, having suffered the passion of anger on some occasion to get the better of him, his blood and spirits were thrown into such a disorder, that the wound bursting out with some of his brains he died upon the spot.

The ancient histories of this island abound with relations of the military exploits of the heroes and champions of this age, and particularly of the famous CUCULLING, so much celebrated in the poem referred to in the Introduction. But as there have been so many testimonies already of the fierce and warlike genius of these people, and as their stories have little or no connexion with the transactions of the times, they appeared to be rather improper for such a work as this. If during the great commotions between the provinces of Connaught and Ulster, the reader has heard nothing of the King of Ireland, though they were commotions which lasted, with some intermission, for seven years, and were attended with fatal consequences to both, this neutrality of the Monarch is to be accounted for, not only from the cause of the quarrel, but from his own turn of mind. The original of the quarrel was an Ulster gentleman's stealing a young lady, whom CONNOR, to defeat the prophecy of a Druid at her birth about the disturbances she should occasion, had kept confined and guarded; and though he had given hostages for their safe return as a testimony of his pardon, yet he caused the lover and his two brothers to be assassinated; whose friends, and the hostages themselves, resenting this perfidy, took up arms against him, as it has been said; and retreating into Connaught, they interested the Queen and people of that province in their cause. But whatever might be the Monarch's sentiments as to the subject of the quarrel, his own disposition led him to take no part in it, but to sit by rather as a spectator unconcerned. There was all the reason in the world indeed for him to interpose by his authority between the parties; had it not been for his peculiar disposition, which made him indifferent to whatever happened. For the King of Ulster had married one, and, on her death, another of his daughters; and a third was the Queen of Connaught. But the Monarch having lost his three sons, who were born at a birth, in battle, and who had increased his natural affection by their accomplishments, contracted from thence so great a melancholy and dejection of spirits, as to make him careless about every thing; and from the length of his sighs, his surname of Feyloch was derived.

Having

Having now brought down the history to the restoration of the Pentarchical government under this King, who sat upon the throne of Ireland for twelve years, it will be a proper period for the conclusion of this book ; which, if it does nothing more, may teach us to value our own happiness, in living in a less barbarous and more enlightened age, and under a constitution of government, though not perfect, yet undoubtedly the best and most eligible upon earth.



T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

I R E L A N D.

B O O K IV.

ACHY IV.

A. M. 3934.
MII.

KEATING.
O FLAHER.
COMERF.
WALSH.
Dissertat.

NOTWITHSTANDING the care and pains of HUGONY the Great, to secure the succession of the Monarchy to his family in exclusion of the other lines, and to abolish the government of the five provinces by Kings of their own, yet we have seen that the succession was interrupted in less than a hundred years, and the patriarchal government again restored and re-established in three hundred. Thus Monarchies, like other sublunary things, are subject to be the sport of time ; and are all of them interrupted or altered in their course by such trivial incidents, as may convince us that the heavens, and not mortals, rule the earth. The next in succession to the throne of Ireland, was ACHY surnamed AREM ; as being the first who introduced the custom of burying the dead in graves dug in the earth. He was of the

the old Heremonian line ; and though he was Monarch of the island for ten years, yet we hear no more of him than that he was killed, and that his death occasioned a great contention for the Monarchy. After many struggles, the electors rejected all the competitors, and conferred the crown upon EDERSGOL the grandson of DEGAD, a peaceable wife and good Prince, who would probably have made a figure worthy of his descent, had he been permitted to enjoy his dignity long enough for the display of his great abilities. But at the end of five years, he was killed by his successor, and in six months after, his son revenged his death and mounted the throne by the name of CONARY the Great, on which he sat sixty years ; the longest, happiest, best administered reign in the whole Irish history.

This is the character given of him by their ablest and most impartial writers ; and there are reasons sufficient perhaps to justify it. But as an abatement of his glory, and which seems a great impeachment of his equity, because his father had been murdered by a Prince of Leinster out of his ambition to seize the Monarchy, CONARY exacted a fine from the whole province, of three hundred cows, three hundred fat hogs, three hundred vessels of ale, and three hundred swords mounted with gold, to be paid every year to him and his successors for ever. It was the highest injustice to make a province answerable for the guilt of a single man ; but in that country, where the murder of their Monarchs, by those who aspired after the crown, was so frequent as to be almost the constant practice, the injustice of this punishment was greatly aggravated. Not content however with this fine, he obliged them also to give up the whole dominion of Offory, which was then of very large extent, that it might be annexed to the province of Munster his native country : and in order to confirm this surrender in the strongest and most solemn manner possible, he obliged the people of Leinster to swear by heaven and earth, the sun and moon and all the planets, that they, and their posterity should for ever submit to this agreement.

CONARY I.

A.M. 3937.

In the first year of this Monarch's reign, the royal palace at Tara was burnt down by accident, which he soon after rebuilt in a very sumptuous

ous

ous manner. The old writers give large, and, I believe, very hyperbolical accounts, of the serenity of the air as well as the tranquillity of the state, and of the extraordinary productions of the earth and sea, in the reign of this favourite Monarch. Nor should all this seem wonderful, they say, when it is considered, that at this time the Saviour of the world was born ; which made these days more auspicious than all that had been before it.

But I find myself obliged to depart in this instance from Mr. O FLAHERTY's chronology, which I have adopted hitherto all along, as being the most accurate : and whereas he has placed the Christian æra in the first year of this Monarch, which he computes in the year of the world three thousand nine hundred and forty nine, I follow the chronology of Archbishop USHER, who places that great event in the year of the world four thousand and four, and consequently in the fifty fifth year of the reign of this Irish Monarch. The difference however is but trifling, and totally immaterial with regard to the history and the transactions which it records. Every one who is at all conversant with subjects of this nature knows, not only how difficult it is to adjust such very ancient æras, but also how much the learned disagree in their computation of the year of the world in which CHRIST was born. If I prefer USHER's to O FLAHERTY's, it is because the greatest number of learned moderns acquiesce in the primate's chronology as the most accurate : and if we only suppose the Christian æra to commence about fifty years later than we find it in the Ogygia, or bring the reign of CONARY and all the epochas in this history about fifty years further down, the difference will be adjusted. The reader will observe then that from this time, the dates in this work are changed from the year of the world to the year of CHRIST, as the most intelligible computation.

Notwithstanding this Monarch enjoyed such a long and peaceful reign, and his name is distinguished in a very extraordinary manner by the historians, yet very few particulars are handed down relating to his administration. It is easy to guess from his character, that all the

arts of peace were cultivated as far as the age he lived in permitted ; and we are informed by TACITUS, that the ports and landings in Ireland were better known at this time than those of Britain ; from the much greater commerce that was carried on by the merchants to the former. A reign of sixty years had never been seen in this country before ; nor was it less extraordinary, that it should continue almost the whole time in peace. Here was therefore opportunity enough for a wise and a good Monarch, to acquire fame and glory to himself, by extending and securing the happiness of his people. For without peace and tranquillity, at home especially, it is impossible for the best and wisest Prince in the world, to give a lustre and improvement to arts and sciences, or to promote trade and commerce : and with the advantage of the most profound and undisturbed repose, unless a Prince has talents, and a disposition to exert them for the public good, his government will be marked by desolation and oppression, by the poverty and servitude of his subjects.

The Irish Monarch, we are told, had both abilities and a heart for government ; and without being informed of the particulars of his conduct in public affairs, we may reasonably conclude, that he formed and executed the best projects in his power to the great and good design of the public happiness. For he could not have acquired the glory which he did acquire, in such an age of liberty and fierce contention, if he had not deserved it. His administration however, wise and benevolent as we have supposed it, did not secure him from all disturbance. A set of insolent and seditious people, of which a son of a King of Wales was at the head, had obliged CONARY to banish them out of the island. In revenge of this treatment, they drew together all the men of desperate fortune whom they could meet with ; and engaging them in the conspiracy for the sake of plunder, they made a descent upon Ireland in the night time, marched in secrecy to the palace at Tara where the Monarch lay, and setting the whole building on fire he perished in the flames. In this manner ended the reign and life of CONARY the great : and his death caused such confusion among all the Princes and the people, that an interregnum of five years ensued before another Monarch was elected.

LUGAD,

LUGAD I. LUGAD, a Prince of the Heremonian line, at length filled the throne; though he had committed incest with his mother many years before. He afterwards obtained a daughter of the King of Denmark in marriage, for whose death he was so much afflicted, that after a reign of eight years he fell upon his own sword and put an end to his life. His successor enjoying the monarchy but one year, CRIMTHAN, the son of LUGAD, by his mother, was invested with it.

CRIMT. I. It has appeared in the second book of this history, that the Picts had in former times a great connexion with the people of Ireland, and were in some degree tributaries to their monarchs. In the reign of CRIMTHAN, who had married a daughter of a Pictish Prince, some of the Irish forces became auxiliaries to the Picts against the Romans in Britain. As faction may be said to be the disease of liberty, so no free states perhaps are without it. Ireland, the freest state that ever existed under a monarchy, was never without its factions, as we have seen; and at this time there was a very powerful one formed against the Monarch. But as he was distinguished by his bravery and success against his enemies, and beloved among the people, an opposition at home appeared of little consequence. A chief of the faction therefore against him applied to AGRICOLA the Roman governor then in Britain, and encouraged him all he could to make a descent on Ireland: assuring him, according to TACITUS, of a certain conquest with only a single legion and a few auxiliaries. An invasion of Ireland in consequence of this advice would have been undertaken by the Roman general, if he had not been recalled soon after; but had it been undertaken with so small a force as had been declared sufficient, the Romans, it is easy to see, would have lost their aim;—as CÆSAR did in his first expedition against Britain with two legions—and the thought of invading Ireland was never afterwards resumed. Indeed the Roman arms in Britain declined so much from this time, that the Picts and their allies the Irish, headed by CRIMTHAN himself in person, made irruptions into the Roman province, where their superiority was confessed; and they returned to their own country loaded with spoils and foreign trophies. Among these were reckoned some
I shields

shields and weapons of extraordinary workmanship and art ; besides equipages, jewels, and other ornaments of value. But this was not the whole acquisition of the Irish Monarch in this expedition. Many arts both military and mechanic, which he learnt of his enemies, he converted to the use and advantage of his subjects, and for the better discipline of his troops. But in the midst of his great designs, and after a reign of sixteen years full of glory and reputation, CRIMTHAN the first lost his life by an unfortunate fall from his horse near his own palace.

At the death of this Monarch, the Milesian succession in the throne of Ireland was interrupted, after it had continued eleven hundred years. Though KEATING and other writers pass over this first plebeian war in silence, and place the rebellion of the usurper above forty years after this time, yet I make no difficulty in rejecting their authority in this, as well as in many other instances, and in following O FLAHERTY and the author of the Dissertations, who are infinitely more accurate. A conspiracy having been formed among the posterity of the Belgians in the several provinces, who thought themselves treated with too much severity, they irritated the common people to take up arms in their defence ; and under a pretence of abolishing the tyranny of their Kings they massacred the nobility in several parts of the kingdom, and set CARBRY of the Belgian race upon the throne, who filled it for five years till his death. Whatever views his party might have, and how strong soever their hopes might be built upon MORAN his son whom they elected to succeed him, yet, by a virtue scarcely ever heard of, MORAN refused the regal title ; and by his example and abilities prevailed upon the people to relinquish their rebellion, and to restore the royal family in the person of FEREDACH the son of CRIMTHAN. There is not in all history, as I remember, another instance of a revolution like this ; brought about by the self-denial and strength of mind of a single man, called to the exercise of royal power through the wickedness and perfidy of his own father, divesting himself of it, and disarming a furious giddy multitude, in order to establish the public tranquillity and to set the lawful heir upon the throne. “ It is astonishing to observe what an influence one man in certain conjunctures can acquire over a factious and noisy mul-
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titude :

CARBRY I.

A. D. 90.

itude : for in proportion as they are fickle and inconsiderate they are easily led either this way or that ; and though they often pursue their schemes with rashness and even with fury, yet for the most part those schemes are general and directed to some common interest, and not to gratify the resentment, or ambition of particular men."

FEREDACH.

A. D. 95.

FEREDACH therefore, though dreaded and hated by the licentious populace, was by the means of the worthy son of a wicked traitor elected to the Monarchy ; and by his upright administration he acquired the name of FEREDACH the just. A Prince of this disposition, we may be sure, was not ungrateful to the man whose virtue was the sole cause of his exaltation ; and we are told that he took MORAN into a great share of the government, and appointed him Chief justice of Ireland. Let the reader figure to himself such a Monarch and such a Minister at one and the same time, and he will soon conceive the happiness of the people : he will see misrule giving place to harmony, insurrection subsiding into tranquillity, and order arising out of confusion. Such was the state of Ireland at the end of the first Plebeian war ; and under such governors it could not be otherwise. Men endowed, as they were, with so large a proportion of the æthereal spirit, — as Lord BOLINGBROKE calls it, — would at no time act upon other principles than for the public good : but in those days of jealousy and popular contention, they could not with safety act upon any other. The greatest commendations are bestowed upon the wisdom and integrity of their government. Among other accounts of their public measures promoting the welfare of the state, the Bards have recorded a mythological fable of a collar worn by MORAN in the execution of his office ; and which the modern historians have been weak enough to deliver down as real history. That this judge might be always upright and impartial in administering justice according to the Monarch's and his own desire, the fable tells us, that they contrived a collar to be worn round his neck, of a property so wonderful and so useful, that, whenever the judge was deviating from equity, would contract itself, and pinch him in exact proportion to his error ; and at all other times would hang loose and easy.

The

The collar however was not so much for the use of MORAN, whose integrity never left him, as for other judges who might succede him; and to extort the truth also from witnesses in the courts of law. Thus, if it was put about the neck of a wicked judge who intended an unjust or partial sentence, it would continue shrinking 'till it strangled him, or 'till he changed his sentence into a just one; when it would instantly dilate and set him at liberty. In the same manner it would act about the neck of an evidence on a trial: and from hence arose a custom in the judicatories of that kingdom, for the Judge, when he suspected the veracity of a witness and had a mind to terrify him from perjury, to charge him solemnly to tell the truth, or else his life would pay for it, as the collar of MORAN was about his neck. The reader, I am sure, will want no assistance in explaining this fable; and all the reflexion I shall make upon it, is that it would be well for the present age if we had MORAN's collar here; not on account of the Judges, whose integrity, it must be said to their honour, wants no preservative; but on account of witnesses in the Courts of justice, where perjury is more notorious than in any age that has been before it. When FEREDACH had reigned one and twenty years, with the greatest glory to himself and with peace and happiness to his people, he died a natural death regretted and beloved.

The successor of this Prince underwent the usual fate of the Irish Monarchs, in three years after his election to the throne, by the hand of the son of FEREDACH; who had not the same abilities and good fortune as his father had; and who after an uneasy reign of seven years was murdered at the breaking out of the second Plebeian war. The name of "Attacots" was given to these rebels in memory of their horrid cruelties; and afterwards it reached to North Britain, as a proper name for all seditious disturbers of the public peace; but in process of time, it was no longer used in this restrained and odious sense, but became appropriated to the people inhabiting close to Adrian's wall in Britain. The second Attacotic war proved in some degree more destructive than the first, by many of the provincial Kings engaging in it, and making their

FIATACH.

A. D. 116.

FIACHA.

own private prejudices and complaints pass with others for the public cause. Old as this artifice is, and detected so much as it hath been, it still continues to impose upon mankind ; and at this day we are as much the dupes of pretended patriots, deceiving ourselves and being deceived with sounds, as the Irish were at the time I am writing of. The provincial Kings, expecting more from the son of FEREDACH than it was in his power to do, and perhaps expecting it because he was the son of such a father, grew uneasy and discontented under his government ; and at the end of seven years entering into a conspiracy, of which ELIM the King of Ulster was at the head, they irritated the people to a rebellion under the guise of liberty, put the Monarch to death in a seditious manner, and set the crown upon ELIM the principal champion of their cause. But it was not long before the people found to their cost that they were mistaken ; and that they had changed the imagined tyranny of a single Monarch, for the real anarchy and misrule of several contending Princes.

ELIM.

A. D. 126.

The son of their late King, with a few of his friends that were attached to him, passed over to North Britain, to a Pictish King his mother's father ; 'till a fair occasion should offer in which he might assert his right. In the mean while ELIM, the chief usurper, attended to nothing but the exercise of his power, and the keeping those under who had lifted him into the throne. All the schemes of utility, formed and established by FEREDACH and MORAN, were laid aside, or neglected ; the arts and sciences were left to shift for themselves ; and even history and learning were rather discountenanced than protected. What an unhappy reverse of times for the people of Ireland ! amidst the confusion introduced by such a government, trade and commerce languished gradually 'till they were almost extinguished ; the fields became uncultivated ; and, to compleat their misery, a grievous famine ensued. No less than four years passed away in this manner, when the spirit of the people being roused by their distresses, they determined to bring about a change of government in favour of the son of their late King, and the grandson of their favourite FEREDACH the Just. To this purpose they sent an invitation to him into Scotland, assuring him of their assistance to recover the crown. TUATHAL was no sooner informed of the deplorable

ble state of his native country, and of the readiness of the people to rise in his favour, than he determined to attempt the possession of the monarchy, and to abolish the tyranny of the usurpers. Assisted by his grandfather, at the head of some of his Pictish veteran troops, he landed in Ireland; and meeting many of his friends ready to join him with their forces, he marched directly to Tara, where several of the principal men of the kingdom were assembled, and where with joyful acclamations he was elected King.

The usurper ELIM, and his coadjutors the provincial Princes, being greatly alarmed at these proceedings, prepared with the utmost vigour for their defence; but they soon felt the difference, between the affections of a people gained by wise and mild and beneficial measures of government, and those that were enraged by tyranny and oppression. It was not long before the two armies met; and ELIM's forces being defeated and himself slain in the battle, the Monarch pursued his victory over all the provinces; and being successful in every engagement against the rebels, he put an end to the usurpation, redeemed the people from the oppression of the Attacots, and restored tranquillity to the kingdom. In this manner ended the second Plebeian war; and in such vastly different colours, are the characters of FEREDACH, and ELIM, delivered down to posterity! What a lesson is this, not only to Kings and rulers, but to all those whose rank and office makes them great enough to be recorded! teaching them what they must expect, and what they may justly dread from history; whose voice, if they are unworthy, will proclaim their infamy, whatever power they may once have had to silence or corrupt it.

TUATHAL.

A. D. 130.

When TUATHAL had thoroughly settled himself on the throne, he convened the general assembly of the states at Tara after the manner of his predecessors; who always held a Parliament in the beginning of their reign, to consult on the affairs of government, and to promote the public welfare. The members of the assembly met him with great pleasure, recognized his title to the crown, and the constitution being again recovered, they took an oath of fidelity to continue the succession to his family,

family, in exclusion of the other lines, as their ancestors had done to HUGONY the Great; by way of attonement for their sedition, and as a recompence for the service he had done his country. For if we suppose, as some of their writers do, that this engagement was entered into as a remedy for those evils which they had smarted under through an elective form of government, they would surely have carried the remedy so far as to compleat the cure, by making the crown hereditary, and not elective in this family: and as they did not make such an improvement in their constitution, they only exchanged the evil which they redressed for another almost as great. But it may perhaps admit of a question, whether they thought that such an alteration in the law of succession would be indeed an improvement of the constitution; or at least, whether they did not choose to submit to the many inconveniencies attending popular elections of their Monarchs, rather than to have them imposed upon the country by the right of primogeniture. Both methods have their inconveniencies; and there is no civil institution perhaps without them.

But amongst a people so jealous of public liberty as the Irish had always been, it is probable that they preferred the former, not by accident or through ignorance, but upon deliberation and by choice; though they sometimes hazarded their safety, and the public tranquillity was for the most part interrupted by it. It must be owned that by making merit and superior abilities the qualifications for the monarchy, without regard to succession, very noble purposes were answered, and great evils avoided, as well as much inconvenience sometimes suffered. Of the first sort was the raising a spirit of emulation and real patriotism in the breasts of youth; and impressing and cultivating the most manly and virtuous principles, in opposition to the temptations of corrupted nature. Of the evils avoided by it the reader may form a notion from what one of their writers has said in its vindication; and I will give it in his own words. “But still how much wiser is such an ordinance, than that which throws all the acquisitions of an ancient and renowned family, into the hands of an half ideot or a licensed madman, without person, or parts, or humanity, or courage; one commonly remarkable for the commission of every kind of extravagance that can be a reproach to himself and the community

nity which tolerates him. How many instances have we seen, of such profligates in our own time. How often have we seen the laborious acquisitions of virtue and valour, the tenure of ages, undermined in almost a moment by a pest of this kind; who sets fire to the train with his own hands, and often takes a frantic pride worthy of such a monster in the violence of the explosion [r].” The description is strong, but it is not unjust; and if there was not a remedy for this evil by deposing the madman, which has been often applied in our own country, an hereditary monarchy by right of birth might be more inconvenient than that which now obtained in Ireland.—But to turn again to the history.

In the same Parliament at Tara, in which the title of TUATHAL to the crown was recognized, and the succession in his family, though not by mere primogeniture without merit or valour, was passed into a law and sworn to, a decree was made for the separation of a large tract of land from each of the four provinces, which met together at a certain place, for the Demesne lands of the crown; in order to supply the Monarch’s household, and to give a splendour and magnificence to the government that was never known before. The part which was thus divided from the rest and thus appropriated, the King appointed for the county of Meath, as it is at this day; and which before consisted only of an inconsiderable territory in those parts. In each of these portions taken out of the four provinces, a magnificent palace was erected in this reign for particular and different uses. In the tract taken from Munster and added now to Meath, the King erected an edifice for the sacred fire; to which the Druids and Augurs were to repair on the last day of October annually, in order to consume the sacrifices that were offered to their Deities. No other fire on that night; under the penalty of a heavy fine, was to be lighted in any house in the kingdom; that all the fires might be derived from this sacred fire, in order to make them propitious and prevent their doing mischief; for which every family was to pay a fine of three pence to the King of Munster, as a compensation for the land he had lost.

In the proportion taken from the province of Connaught, a palace was erected for the convocation of Visneach, at which all the inhabitants who

[r] Dissertations, &c. p. 80, 81.

were able were to appear on the first of May, to offer sacrifice to BEL the chief Deity of the island, and which was called the Bell-Tine; that is the festival of BEL the God of fire, mentioned in the Introduction. The Britons worshiped the same Deity; and from thence it is probable was derived the custom of the festival in England on May day; celebrated by morris dancers and milk maids, with garlands of flowers, and such other decorations as they can procure. But this is merely my own conjecture, and of no sort of moment whether it is right or wrong. It was customary upon this day in almost every village in Ireland, to kindle two fires in honour of BEL, and to drive their cattle of every kind between them; from a superstitious conceit that it would preserve them from the murrain, and other pestilential distempers for that year. At this convocation of Visneach, the inhabitants, for want of the convenience of coin of any kind, used to barter their horses, arms, and other effects with which they abounded, for what they stood in need of; which was the way of buying and selling in those ages. The King of Connaught, as a tribute or acknowledgement for the lands taken from his province where this convocation assembled, had a horse and arms from every Lord of a manor, and from every chieftain who attended it.

The third palace was that of Tailtean, and originally belonged to the province of Ulster. Here the celebrated fair was held on the first of August, in honour of the last Belgian queen of that name, and established by King LUGHAD, as it was mentioned in his reign; in commemoration of the care she had taken of his education in arms and literature. To this fair the inhabitants brought all their children who were of a proper age for marriage, and contracted for the disposal of them. That there might be no disorder nor confusion, the young men stood all on one side and the women on the other; and when every thing was adjusted between the parents of those who expressed a liking for each other, the bride folks were taken out and the ceremony was performed. As barbarous as this institution may appear to have been, yet it had an ignorant and early age in which it was practised for its excuse. But what excuse is there for an English custom, not less savage and more unnatural, in the present age of politeness and refinement among the families of the great; where generally no regard is had to the liking on either side, where they often know little more of each other, than the poor Irish did, before the

the match is made, and where interest alone is the bond of an union, the most intimate and tender, and which is to last for life? No wonder that matrimony, when it is thus concluded, should be complained of as the source of much unhappiness!

Though the fair of Tailtean had been established long ago, as it has been said, yet no palace had been erected till the reign of TUATHAL; and as a compensation to the King of Ulster for the part of his province taken into Meath on which the palace stood, from every couple that were married he received an ounce of silver. The palace of Tara was also rebuilt, and much improved by this monarch, which originally belonged to the province of Leinster; but I shall refer the reader to the reign of OLLAM FODLA in the second book for the uses of this palace; where he will find a very particular and exact account of it. I don't find that any tribute or acknowledgment was paid to the King of Leinster, as to the other provincial Kings; and the reason I suppose was that Tara had for many ages before been separated from that province, for the royal palace and residence of the monarch.

All the historians concur in giving TUATHAL the character of one of the best and wisest Princes that ever sat on the throne of Ireland; who introduced a state of plenty and public tranquillity that was never known in it before. He was guilty however of an act of great injustice towards the province of Leinster, the fatal effects of which extended to near six hundred years; and at the time when it was committed, prevented in a great degree the succour of the Picts, the allies of Ireland, who were then reduced to the utmost distress by the Roman army. It was in its consequences an affair of great importance in the Irish history, and the account which is given of it is this. ACHY the King of Leinster, having married a daughter of TUATHAL whom he carried home into that province, in about a year afterwards made a visit to the Monarch at Tara; and acquainting him with the death of his daughter solicited her sister to become his wife; as the only way to repair his loss, and to preserve the alliance and friendship of the King of Ireland. The treaty being accepted and carried into execution, ACHY took this lady also home to his palace: But finding on her arrival there that her sister was still living, and that they were both abused by the King of Leinster, the surprize and vexa-

tion threw her immediately into fits ; which succeeded each other so fast and with so much violence, as to put an end to her life. The surprize of the Queen at first sight, supposing she came to her on a visit, was not so great, we may be sure ; but when she had heard the melancholy tale of her husband's baseness, her indignation, and the grief she felt for the death of her sister and the cruel occasion of it, were the cause of her own death soon after.

The Irish Monarch being informed of the treachery of the King of Leinster, and the tragical end of his two daughters, determined to take his revenge for this indignity offered to him in the persons of his children : and had he contented himself with chastising *ACHY* very severely he would have done an act of justice to society, as well as have made a sacrifice to his own resentment. But the resentment of *TUATHAL* was not to be appeased without cruelty ; and it will be a blot upon his memory to all posterity. Dispatching therefore messengers to the other princes and chiefs, to complain of the villany of the King of Leinster and to demand their assistance towards his punishment, he raised all the forces that he could, and marched into the province with a resolution to destroy it by fire and sword. When *ACHY* was informed of the great strength of the army that was got together against him, and finding that it would be in vain for him to think of making a stand against a force so much superior to his own, he sent a message to the Monarch in the most submissive terms to sue for a cessation of arms, that he might atone for his offence in a treaty of peace. The Monarch might feel some compunction at the thoughts of ravaging the country and killing or ruining its inhabitants for the personal crime of a single man, though he was their King ; and if he deserved the character which is given of him in other respects by the historians, it must touch his humanity very strongly.

The injustice in this instance, I presume will appear to the reader to be extremely flagrant ; and yet is it not done in our own age every day, nay do we not do it ourselves, without perceiving it ? What else are all the wars in Christendom arising from the ambition of particular Princes, and the chastisement or the check of that ambition, in the persons, in the property, and in the countries of their subjects ? what else is the war that we, and most of the powers

powers of Europe, are now at this time engaged in? Are not the blood, and treasure, and tranquillity of the people, who are innocent of the offence, and who could not prevent the pride and injustice that we complain of, are not these the sacrifice to our resentment against their sovereign? This will teach us that war, however necessary sometimes to recover or vindicate our right, as in the present case, yet in its consequence is diabolical. The people who alone commit the injury, and who therefore in equity and good conscience should alone be punished, are almost the only people who escape all punishment. They sit at home in their palaces far from the horrid scene, enjoying ease and pleasure, amusing themselves with the news of conquest or defeat, adding one scheme of wild ambition to another; whilst their innocent subjects are pillaged, undone, or slaughtered, their territories devastated, and the families of thousands, who survive the loss of parents or husbands, made miserable for ever. This is a lesson to Princes which few Princes learn: it will however teach us all not to delight in war, which, how necessary soever, is a dreadful evil; to assert our right, if it is possible, in the way of treaty; and if war at last is unavoidable, that it should be carried on with as little injury to private property, and with as much humanity to the unhappy sufferers, as the nature of it will admit. We are a sensible humane and benevolent people, but we suffer our passion for national glory to run away with our understandings; and we don't stay to consider that this passion is artfully enflamed by those who make a great private fortune by the public distress. But to return.

Whatever were the sentiments of the Irish Monarch on this subject, it is certain that he pushed his resentment against the King of Leinster much further than he ought to have done. For although he forbore to destroy his province, as he might have done, with fire and sword, yet the only accommodation which he would agree to, was a tribute to be paid every second year to him and his successors for ever, of three thousand cows, as many hogs, as many sheep, as many copper cauldrons, as many ounces of silver and the same number of mantles: and to this contract the King and people of Leinster were by a solemn oath to bind themselves, and, as far as lay in their power, their successors for ever. If there was any pretence for punishing the people of the province by this fine for the dishonour done to TUATHAL by their Prince, there

was not surely the least shadow of justice in continuing it after his death; and we shall see in the sequel that the payment of it, though submitted to for several ages, was the frequent occasion of many contests, which proved fatal to the nobility and gentry on both sides, 'till it was abolished. Without exaggeration therefore it may be said, that he was the author of these calamities, by sowing the seed of contentions in imposing a tax upon a province, for a personal injury from one Prince to another, and contrary to equity and common sense to be continued for ever. Whenever cruel and unjust conditions are submitted to by a people, they are submitted to only through the necessity of the times, and for want of power to resist them: but whenever they are in a capacity to do themselves justice, they will no longer submit to those conditions. Of this sort was the fine imposed by TUATHAL, known in Ireland by the name of the Borome or Leinster tribute; unjust and tyrannical in itself, and productive of infinite mischief to ages then unborn: and that he might interest many others besides his successors in demanding it, a third part was to be paid to the people of Meath the territory of the Monarch, a third to the inhabitants of Connaught, and the other third to the NIALLS of the North, all of them his auxiliaries in this expedition.

There is nothing more relating to this Monarch in the public history, than that he convened assemblies at Cruachain and Eamania for the regulation of the police, and the encouragement of arts and manufactures; as it was mentioned in the Introduction. For since the death of FEREDACH, and during the usurpation of the plebeians, these assemblies, as well as the parliament at Tara, had been dissolved; and many corruptions and disorders had crept into public affairs, which TUATHAL made it the business of his government to redress. Thus the tradesmen and mechanicks, as well as the artists of all professions, were under the management of a committee, who had power to examine into their abilities, to reform all abuses, and to suspend such as by their unfairness or want of skill brought their occupation into discredit. It must be observed that till this reign, few or none of the posterity of the Milesians submitted to any trade: the lower branches were the militia of the island, the historians, antiquaries, physicians, harpers, judges, heralds, and inferior officers of the state, who would not submit to any manual labour, lest they should degrade their original, or bring a stain upon their families; and the mechanicks

chanicks of the country were the remainder of the Belgians and Dannonians, who had been permitted to remain there, in order to carry on these servile occupations. This pride has been so inherent from that time to this, that Bishop BERKLEY has said, a kitchen wench in his family refused to carry out cinders, because she was descended from an old Irish stock." But in the reign of this Monarch, when they saw that the legislature took trade and manufactures under their management, and that no person was allowed to exercise arts without a license from a committee empowered by a general assembly of the states, many of the Milesians condescended to follow some employment, and to make themselves good for something besides cutting one anothers throats. TUATHAL having reigned with greater splendour than any of his predecessors, for thirty years, at last fell in battle by the hands of his successor of the line of IR; and consequently the engagement entered into with TUATHAL was broke in the first instance. But however his son revenged this perfidy, by killing the Monarch who had possessed the throne, at the end of four years, and by calling back the people to their loyalty in his own election.

FEIDLIM the son of TUATHAL having thus obtained the crown, was from his great love of justice surnamed the Legislator. He not only gave excellent examples of equitable government in his own private conduct, but he got the Parliament at Tara, at its first convention in his reign, to establish the law of retaliation. From this time, every sentence and decree which he passed upon any criminal was exactly conformable to this law; and he enjoined an observance of the same exactness in all the public judicatories in the kingdom. If any one had defrauded another of his cattle, his sheep, or any part of his property, or if he had destroyed the use of an arm, a leg, an eye, or had taken away his life, the criminal was to make satisfaction in the like kind; and it was not in the power of the person injured to commute the offence. By the terror of this law, the people of Ireland were brought to more humanity, honesty, and good manners of every kind, than they ever were before; and the monarch enjoyed the fruits of his just and useful administration; during the nine years of his reign, 'till a natural death removed him out of the world. A much greater authority than that of any human legislator hath given a sanction to the law established by this Monarch;

FEIDLIM.

A. D. 164.

and it seems astonishing that it should be discontinued in any Christian Country. It is not only the most equitable law in itself, I presume to say, that can be conceived, against wilful injury, but in its consequence bids fairer than any other to promote public order and integrity.

But be this however as it may ; I have given it as my opinion in another work [s], which I shall now repeat, “ that we presume too much on our power of making laws, and too far infringe on the command of GOD, by taking away the lives of men, in the manner we do in England, for theft and robbery ; and that this is not only a pernicious error, —“ for extreme justice is an extreme injury”—but a national abomination. It must be granted that all societies have a power within themselves of making laws to secure property, and of annexing punishments to the breach of them : but then on the other hand it must be owned, that no man or body of men can have power to make laws which are contrary to the laws of GOD ; or to ordain such punishments for the breach of them as he hath positively forbidden. It is to little purpose to urge, that men may give up their natural rights for their mutual benefit, and to hold their lives and liberties on certain terms and conditions, on the breach of which they should be forfeited : because though this argument will hold with regard to liberty and property, it will not hold with regard to life ; of which GOD alone is the sole disposer, and over which we have no right in ourselves or in other men. A robber indeed in this country sins with his eyes open, and knows the penalty which he is going to incur : but the wilfulness of the crime is no sort of excuse for making the punishment far exceed the heinousness of the transgression : and who will deny that a little theft or robbery—perhaps of the value of two or three shillings only—is not punished infinitely beyond a just proportion, when it is punished with death?

These laws however, in my opinion, are not more abominable, than they are ill contrived ; if this observation, which men versed in affairs make, is true, that the riches of the nation are in proportion to the

[s] Hist. of Utopia, note p. 42, 43. in the Memoirs of the Life of Sir THO. MORE.

number of hands employed in works of skill and labour. How many hands of this sort which might be so employed, in making sails and cordage for the navy, in our fleets or dock yards, in mending the highways, or converting waste lands into tillage, are sent every sessions to Tyburn for theft and robbery, the reader need not be told. The laws of God affix no other punishment to these crimes than ample restitution or perpetual slavery; a word of great horror in England where we boast so highly of our liberty: but it does not require the spirit of prophecy to foresee, that this liberty, which is now in many cases our misery, will some time or other be our destruction. A confinement of this sort to constant labour for the public—whatever name we give it—would be dreaded worse than death by these wretches who have no idea of a future state, and consequently would deter them more from the commission of such crimes; which is the only reasonable end of punishment in a state.” The reader, it is hoped, will excuse this digression, on account of its importance and good intention, whether or no it should give him any pleasure or conviction.

The throne of Ireland being vacant by the death of FEIDLIM, the Heremonian line was again continued by the election of CATHIR, surnamed the Great; but whose short reign of three years only when he was slain in battle, contained nothing memorable or worthy of a place in history. His surname was therefore probably given him, not on account of any remarkable valour in the field, or any extraordinary abilities in the cabinet, but for the immense wealth which he was possessed of; and which he disposed of by will among his ten sons, and some of the chiefs of the province of Leinster, of which he had been King. Indeed according to the particulars related of this will, there was sufficient reason for giving him the surname of Great; and it is very much to be questioned, if any Monarch in Europe was ever possessed of a more valuable personal estate than this Irish King. His wealth however availed him as little as it does other princes; and CONN, called the Hero of the Hundred Battles, having killed him in an engagement, mounted the throne.

CATHIR.

A. D. 174.

CONN.

A. D. 177.

Few of all the Monarchs of Ireland displayed greater abilities than this son of FEIDLIM the Legislator; and none had their abilities more tried, both in prosperity and distress, through a course of five and thirty years which he held the crown. The King of Leinster refusing, and with great reason, to pay the tribute which this Monarch's grandfather TUATHAL had imposed, CONN immediately declared war against him, but after two engagements he was defeated; and the King of Leinster making an incursion as far as the palace of Tara, possessed himself of it for four years. In the mean time, CONN being mortified with this disgrace of being driven from his residence, collected all his forces, regained the palace of Tara, vanquished the King of Leinster in several battles, and obliged the province to pay the tribute as long as he lived.

The line of HEBER having been dispossessed of the province of Munster by the descendents of DEGAD, as the reader may remember, EUGENE the Great, who had also the name of MOGHA NUADAT, a Prince of Munster of the Heberian line, disgusted at the ascendancy which the other family had acquired in his province, retired into Leinster to a son of CATHIR the Great, who at that time had the government of the province. Having there contracted an alliance of friendship with that Prince, and being assisted by him with a choice body of troops for the recovery of his right, EUGENE marched in a hostile manner into Munster, and was met by ANGUS the King of the province with a numerous army. They no sooner met than a fierce and bloody battle ensued, the success of which was for a good while doubtful; but victory declaring at last for EUGENE, he totally routed the enemy, and drove them out of the province. ANGUS, enraged to be thus defeated, repaired immediately to CONN the King of Ireland to entreat his assistance. The King supplied him with a body of fifteen thousand men; and thus reinforced, he marched into Munster, with a resolution, formed by revenge and indignation, to recover his crown, or perish in the attempt. He found EUGENE waiting for him with his army drawn out in order of battle; and as it was accustomed to victory, it soon broke through the allied army of ANGUS; of the greatest part of which they made a terrible slaughter, and put the rest to a general rout. Animated with this success, EUGENE banished the Degad colony out of the province of Munster, excepting those

those however who were contented to submit peaceably to the change of government.

The Monarch, who was related to the dethroned King of Munster, resenting this injury as well as the defeat of his troops, declared war against him as a principal; and after various successes drove the usurper out of the kingdom. Nine years this hero lived an exile in Spain; and having married a sister of a Prince of that country, he found means to insinuate himself into the affections of the Spaniards, and to procure their assistance to revenge his cause. The Prince conducted him back to Ireland with so powerful a fleet and army, that he not only recovered the province of Munster, but by several engagements which he had with the Monarch, in which the latter always was defeated, he divided the whole island with him; and the invincible Hero of the hundred battles was obliged to submit, for the sake of peace, to this dismembring of his dominions. This division was known and remembered in after ages, by the names of Leath-Con, and Leath-Mogha; the former denoting the Northern half, and the latter the Southern half of the island; which the reader is desired to keep in remembrance. Before a year expired under this settlement, the ambitious spirit of EUGENE put him upon new demands; and CONN was convinced that nothing less would satisfy him than the entire Monarchy of the island. Being determined therefore to yield nothing further than he had done, a war on both sides was prepared for; but the King of Ireland perceiving that he was much inferior in strength to his rival and his Spanish auxiliaries which he had still detained, came one morning into his camp, and surprizing them in their beds, put the princes to the sword, and restored peace to the kingdom during the remainder of his life.

In this manner ended the glory of the famous EUGENE the Great, who had two other surnames besides that of MOGHA NUADAT: and if it shews too much security and incaution in such an experienced General, on the other hand it betrays a mean and cruel artifice unjustifiable towards an enemy, and therefore very unworthy of so great a Monarch as CONN, the renowned hero of the hundred battles. EUGENE left a

son by his Spanish Princess named OLLIOLL OLOM, who, we shall find, will make a great figure in this history at the head of the province of Munster, and even married to the daughter of CONN the mortal enemy of his father. I shall take no other notice of a fable in the life of EUGENE, of a Druid foretelling a famine seven years before it happened, and persuading him to build storehouses and buy up all the spare provisions, than to acquaint the reader that such a fable there is ; no doubt either invented, or at least amplified at first by Druidic craft, but which some writers have been weak enough to relate as real history.

CONARY II.

A. D. 212.

The peace of the nation being secured, and the Degad family again established in the province of Munster, the Monarch raised them to the highest pitch of grandeur in his power ; by giving his daughter to a young Prince of that family, who succeeded him in the throne by the name of CONARY II. The King of Ulster having conceived a mortal hatred against CONN, disguised fifty ruffians in the habit of women ; and when the Monarch was preparing to celebrate the feast and hold the Parliament at Tara, being unattended by any guards, the ruffians attacked and murdered him. If the King of Ulster proposed by this assassination, as it is probable he did, to get himself elected into the Monarchy, he was not only disappointed in his aim by the advancement of CONARY the Second, but he entailed such miseries on his province by the revenge that was taken on his perfidy, as ended at last in the extirpation of his family, and the establishment of the Heremonian line ; as we shall see hereafter. This great access of power to the Degad now the Conarian race, made the Heberian and Irian lines, who from the beginning had possessed the two Munster provinces, extremely jealous of the Heremonian interest ; now united by the alliance and close conjunction of the two branches abovementioned. They found the latter gaining stronger power than even in the heart of their own country ; and they shewed their discontent too plainly not to have it perceived, that they would improve every opportunity to abate or crush it.

CONARY the second, a wise and considerate Prince, foresaw that these discontents, joined to the great power which the Heberians had still in
this

this province, must one day prove disadvantageous to his family ; and therefore he made use of his present advantages, as sovereign of the island, to provide against the danger. To this end he made enquiries after that part of the race of DEGAD, who had remained in Ulster when he was driven from thence ; and by a treaty of friendship and alliance with them, he provided for the future safety and establishment of his family. In consequence of this treaty, and in spite of all opposition from the Irian line, he got his own relation and a Prince of the Degad race elected King of Ulster ; which gave them such a settlement in that province as some time afterwards put the greatest part of it into their hands. But his untimely end, through the treachery of NEMETH his own near relation, who murdered him in the ninth year of his reign, prevented the bringing his plan to the perfection which he had intended. From this CONARY King of Ireland, descended the Dalriads of Scotland ; who will make a great figure in the sequel of this history, as giving Kings to that country, and in process of time to England. What the particular grounds of the quarrel were between NEMETH and the King the history does not inform us ; but as we are told that he married the Queen in a short time after he had assassinated the Monarch, it is not improbable that his passion for her might be the occasion of it. It does not appear that he made any attempt to possess the throne ; but if he had any such view he was disappointed : nor did his marriage of the Queen prevent her sons from entering into measures to revenge the death of their father upon the assassin.

CONARY the Second was succeeded by ART or ARTHUR the melancholy, a son of CONN ; who held the government of the island, amidst great dissensions in his family, for thirty years. One of his sisters, as we have said, was first married to CONARY, and then to his murderer ; and another whose name was SABA, the widow of MACNIAD by whom she had a son called MAC-CONN, was afterwards the wife of OLLIOLL OLOM abovementioned, the King of Munster. The factions among these powerful descendents of CONN-KEDCATHACH, as all factions do, proved a great detriment to the state ; and whilst some abetted the

claims of one party, and others sided with those who opposed them; the welfare of the publick had little or no attention. It does not seem from the surname of the Monarch, that he was capable of entering into great affairs, which require a vigorous active spirit as well as judgment and sagacity; and during the thirty years of his reign, we hear of nothing worthy the Monarch or the hero 'till the last action of his life in which he fell. The reader may remember a revolution in the province of Munster in favour of the Heremonian line; and as it was made without any disturbance or opposition, the family of HEBER, who had 'till then held the government of that province, were admitted into the principal state offices. On the other hand, when this family possessed the throne of their ancestors as we have seen they sometimes did; the Heremonian line were entrusted with the same authority, and presided particularly in the Courts of justice. We are told that this succession in the posts of trust and honour continued 'till the time of OLLIOLL OLOM; who banished MAC CONN, the son of his wife by a former husband, that had been brought up in his court, and was made Chief justice of the province, for a corruption which he was convicted of in the execution of his office.

How the King of Munster had a power to banish a criminal further than out of his own province we are not told; and it is not unlikely that he was obliged to have recourse to the authority of the Monarch to transport the offender out of the island; as we may conjecture from the sequel. The exiled Prince, being of a factious and turbulent disposition, and thinking himself injured greatly by his banishment, was bent upon revenge. But to return into his own country in a hostile manner, in spite of the sentence which had expelled him from it, without a force sufficient to sustain him in his rebellion, was more likely to procure his own destruction than to hurt his enemy. He therefore applied himself to BEIN-BRIT a Prince of Wales, for a supply of troops to make a descent on Ireland; and in order the more effectually to procure his aid, he assured the Prince that he had a considerable party in the island who resented the injustice of his sentence; and who waited only for his coming with a few soldiers to rise in arms for his revenge. The Prince, who was one of the greatest heroes

heroes of his age, and being naturally fond of warlike expeditions, lent a favourable ear to the application of MAC CONN; and getting together a numerous army of all nations who were willing to enlist under his banner, he put them on board his transports, and landed them on the Irish coast. They were no sooner disembarked, than they sent a herald to the Monarch; requiring him either to resign the government immediately, or to give them battle, and decide the quarrel by the sword. From this circumstance it is that we must conjecture, that the sentence of banishment was enforced, if not wholly pronounced by the Irish Monarch.

The King had scarcely heard of the invasion when he received the challenge: and though he was greatly surprized at this bold and insolent demand, yet it roused him out of his melancholy; and he prepared with the utmost expedition to drive them out of the island. To this end he summoned OLLIOLL OLOM with all his forces out of Munster, who had been the principal cause of this rebellion, and sent orders to the General of the militia to bring him all the succour that was in his power. OLLIOLL obeyed the summons with great alacrity; and having entered into the closest connexion of politicks and interest with the sons of CONARY the second, whose sister he had married, he called them to his assistance against the rebellion of MAC CONN his son in law, and their nephew; who was abetted in it by NEMETH the murderer of their father. The young Princes being determined to revenge his death, came readily into the measures of the King of Munster; and they joined the Monarch ARTHUR with all their forces. But FINN the General of the militia [b] was seduced or bribed from his allegiance, by the Prince of Wales, and the rebel; and not only refused to attend the King himself in the expedition, but prevailed upon several of the officers under him to get out of the way on the day of battle. The melancholy spirit of the Monarch however having been roused, he was not discouraged at this treachery of his General; and having pronounced a solemn curse upon him as a traitor to the crown, he led his army against the enemy.

[b] This is the hero so much celebrated in the poems of Ossian, corruptly called FINGAL and falsely said there to be a Caledonian chief, &c.

But so great was the faction at that time in the family of CONN KEDCATHACH, that a brother of OLLIOLL OLOM took the side of the invaders, as well as NEMETH who had married a sister of OLLIOLL's Queen and relict of the Monarch CONARY the Second. The rebel army, though consisting of foreigners of several nations, was by the conduct and vigilance of the Prince of Wales their chief commander, under the exactest discipline; and they waited for the King to begin the attack. When the two armies engaged, each side fought with so much fury, that the victory was doubtful for some hours. At length the brother of OLLIOLL had the good fortune to kill the King, which so dispirited his troops that they instantly fled from the field of battle; and it was not in the power of the Princes who fought round him to recover them from their pannick. The rebel MAC CONN, and his auxiliary the Prince of Wales, knew how to take their advantage, and a most dreadful carnage of some of the bravest troops in the kingdom ensued; as they gave no quarter and put all they met with to the sword. Among the slain, besides the Monarch, were the King of Connaught his ally, and seven of the sons of OLLIOLL OLOM, who had the same mother with MAC CONN the rebel chief, and were brought up together with him from their infancy. But a spirit of faction, regardless of all ties human and divine, is deaf to the calls of nature as well as humanity, and transforms men into brutes.

The victory over the Irish Monarch in the field of battle being thus compleat, MAC CONN pursued his success; and in the compass of a week had so thoroughly subdued his enemies, that he took quiet possession of the throne of Ireland, and was the third Prince of the race of ITH that had ever arrived at that high honour. In all probability it was an honour to which he would not have aspired, nor succeeded in if he had, had it not been for the revenge which the punishment of his crimes impelled him to take, and the power which he acquired fortunately by taking it. But a thousand instances occur of enemies doing the work of friends, and of artful men producing honour out of disgrace. So vain is human foresight, and so mysterious and overruling are the ways of heaven! The proper name of this successful Monarch was LUGAD; but his surname of MAC CONN was that

that by which he was most usually distinguished. After a short and unquiet reign of three years, as he was distributing his liberality to the poets and artists of the island, he was insidiously killed with a spear, by the contrivance of CORMAC the son of ARTHUR in resentment of the rebellion against his father. From this MAC CONN descended several noble families in Munster, and the MAC CATHLINS, now CAMPBELLS, Dukes of Argyle in Scotland.

I have just mentioned the sons of CONARY the second as joining the forces of OLLIOLL OLOM. The history obliges me now to be more particular in the account of one of them, ACHY Riada, that is the "long armed;" who being a Prince of great ambition and of an active genius, was permitted by OLLIOLL OLOM his relation to raise such forces among the Degad race in Munster as were willing to follow his fortune, in order to gain a settlement in the province of Ulster. FERGUS at that time King of the province, and originally of the same family with ACHY RIADA, favoured his pretensions; and by these assistances he soon wrested the North-East parts of Ulster from the Irians, and settled there with the people that followed him out of Munster. Hence the acquisition thus made took the name of Dal Riada: but this was not sufficient to satisfy the restless temper of ACHY. Being in sight of a country over against him, where probably several Irish clans inhabited at that time, he made a descent upon it with a considerable force; and either through friendship or through fear obtained that country from the British Picts, which for many ages was known by the name of the "Albanian Dalriada." This, according to the best historians, was the first nominal settlement of the Scots in Britain; and this account is confirmed by our venerable BEDE himself; who, as Bishop STILLINGFLEET observes, was very inquisitive into these affairs.

The Monarch MAC CONN being treacherously slain, as I said, by the instigation of CORMAC, it is proper that I should give the reader some account of the latter; who is soon to make a principal figure in this history. For it was not immediately upon the death of MAC CONN that

FERGUS.

A. D. 253.

that he mounted the throne of Ireland : For FERGUS, who was distinguished by the name of the “Black Teeth”, of the Heremonian line, was first elected to that honour in the following manner. On the death of MAC CONN, CORMAC having secured the succession, as he imagined, made a great entertainment in Ulster for the King and chiefs of that province. But FERGUS aspiring himself to the Monarchy of the island, and having two brothers with him who were men of daring spirit and resolution, they contrived to set a mark of public ignominy upon CORMAC, and then to drive him out of the province. To this end when he was doing the honours of his entertainment, an officer belonging to FERGUS put a lighted candle to CORMAC’s face and burnt his beard ; and it was with the utmost difficulty, with the help of some of his guests who were sitting round him, that he escaped this attempt upon him and got away into Connaught. The King of Ulster having thus disgraced and driven away the candidate for the Monarchy, set himself up ; and after two battles, in which two of the sons of OLLIOLL OLOM were slain, he went to Tara and was enthroned sovereign of the island.

But the glory of FERGUS was of a very short duration ; and his fate is a lesson to Princes, how unsafe it is to provoke a man of rank and spirit by a public personal ignominy, which of all injuries is the last that is forgotten. CORMAC, enflamed to the highest degree with this insult, breathed nothing but revenge against the whole house of FERGUS : and that his resolution might become effectual, he applied himself to the remaining heads of the OLLIOLL OLOM family his relations, who had still great authority and interest in the island. LUGAD LAGA the brother of OLLIOLL, in order to wipe off the infamy of his revolt against the Monarch ARTHUR, whom, as the reader may remember, he slew in battle, came readily into the measures of his son CORMAC ; and proved himself in the event a very faithful and successfully. To these invincible heroes joined THADY, a grandson of OLLIOLL OLOM’s ; whose father was overthrown in battle by the reigning Monarch, and who was therefore easily induced to enter into the confederacy. CORMAC having strengthened himself in this manner within a year after his

his disgrace, resolved to seek out the Monarch and his two brothers, and to give them battle. The reader will excuse me if I omit the fictitious embellishments of this part of the history, and relate only the simple fact of LUGAD's having cut off the heads of the three brothers with his own hand in this battle, and of THADY's putting the whole army of the enemy into confusion, and pursuing them with a terrible slaughter. The victory being thus compleat, and the Monarchy become vacant by the death of FERGUS, it was no difficult matter for CORMAC, with the help of such allies, to ascend the throne of Ireland : and as he gave a lustre to this Monarchy which it had never known before, and established it on a new footing, so I think it will be proper that his reign should give a beginning to another book.



T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

I R E L A N D.

B O O K V.

CORMAC.

A. D. 254.
Mss.

KEATING.
O FLAHER.
COMERF.
LYNCH.
Dissertat.

CORMAC the son of ARTHUR and grandson of CONN, and therefore distinguished in history by the name of CORMAC O CONN, having possessed himself of the crown, rewarded THADY for his assistance with several lands on the banks of the river Liffy : but according to KEATING, he was guilty of the most infamous ingratitude ; and THADY conquered these territories by dint of arms. This however is supported by so strange a tale as gives an air of fiction to the whole ; and I choose rather to follow the authority of O FLAHERTY, whose account is more agreeable to the acknowledged character of this Monarch. Not that CORMAC is to be cleared of all acts of violence, though he was as just and wise a Prince as had ever reigned in Ireland : but his prudence would prevent the ingratitude which is charged

ed upon him towards a man whose power had principally contributed to his exaltation; and who could therefore disturb, if he could not dethrone him. The author who makes this report to his disadvantage, allows that he was “a Prince of the most consummate wisdom, understood perfectly the maxims of government, and was the most accomplished statesman of the age.” Strange that a man who says this of CORMAC, should at the same time relate for real history, that when he saw the dreadful condition in which THADY was with the wounds he had acquired when fighting on his side, he ordered a surgeon to inclose an ear of barley in one, to bind up a black worm in another, and to conceal the point of a rusty spear in a third; in order to torture him with more pain, and in the end to affect his life. The reader will excuse my not giving him the whole tale, as it is too ridiculous to insert; and for the same reason I must omit another relating to the King’s marriage with EITHNE, the foster-daughter of a wealthy herdsman in the province of Leinster. These are tales which suited the ignorance and the customs of the age in which they were originally recorded, but which ought not to hold a place in authentic history.

As soon as CORMAC was in full and quiet possession of the throne of Ireland, he applied himself with great assiduity to revise the ancient laws of the kingdom; that he might abolish those which were inconvenient or absurd, retain those which were useful, and establish others which were accommodated to the temper and genius of the people he was to govern. This is a lesson to Princes and states of modern times, which, as they are more enlightened, it is shameful that they are yet to learn: and it shews either want of spirit, want of attention, or want of genius in the Prince and people, to be governed by laws and customs introduced so many hundred years ago, that they are become useless, inconvenient, and, the meaning of them being not understood, ridiculous. The Irish Monarch had too much wisdom and resolution to permit laws and customs to have authority, merely because they had been such; unless they were still of use, and adapted to the manners of the age he lived in. He considered very wisely, that as it was impossible from the nature of human

constitutions that any one should be in every respect compleat, so it was next to impossible that it should continue long to retain even that compleatness which it had at first.

He saw that length of time, improvement of observation, and change of circumstances to which every state is subject, either made alterations necessary, or caused great inconvenience for the want of them. Therefore like a true friend to his country, he meditated and effected such alterations in its laws and customs, as the nature of the constitution, and the circumstances of the times required. Nor did he confine these changes, as we shall see presently, to civil affairs, but he extended them to religion. In short his sentiments were too enlarged, and his intentions of good to his kingdom were too sincere and generous, to permit the motives, which tie the tongues and the hands of men in power in our days, to dissuade him from the alterations which he thought necessary to the beauty or the strength of the constitution: and though they dignify these motives with the appellation of reasons of state—the wretched subterfuge of shallow politicians—yet if the mask were pulled off, they would be found to proceed only from indolence, or cowardice, or poorness of spirit. None of those had any place in CORMAC'S temper of mind; and therefore he made it his business to introduce every improvement that he could devise, without regard to forms of ancient usage. The ordinances which he established for the public good, which are yet to be seen it seems in the old parchment records, and which shew his great skill in the laws and antiquities of his country, were never abolished whilst the Irish affairs had any existence.

Besides the alterations that he made in the laws and public customs before-mentioned, he supported the royal dignity with a state and grandeur far surpassing all that had gone before him. The palace of Midchuarta, where he entertained the ambassadors of foreign princes and the nobility of the island, was enlarged and beautified by this Monarch: the length of which is said to have been about four hundred and fifty foot, about fourscore in breadth, and the height about fifty. In the middle of the state room hung a lanthorn of prodigious size and most curious workmanship; and the lodging apartments were furnished with an hundred and fifty beds, besides the
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bed of state in which the King himself usually lay. There never had been a Monarch on the throne of Ireland who was attended with such a retinue. He had an hundred and fifty of the most distinguished champions of the kingdom as the yeomen of his guard, to wait upon his person, and to serve him, especially at his table when he dined in public; where he had a large side-board of gold as well as silver plate. The household troops, who were in constant duty, consisted of a thousand and fifty of the flower of the Irish army: and the other ensigns and distinctions of royalty which he had about him, which were equal to the dignity of the greatest princes at that time, made the court of this Monarch famous throughout the world. What added something to its lustre was his numerous issue; Three sons of great renown in arms, and ten daughters of distinguished beauty and accomplishments.

But CORMAC, whose soul was filled with a desire of glory, was not content with mere domestic grandeur. He sent a great fleet into North-Britain, which infesting the coast for three years together acquired the government in Albania. He defeated the people of Munster in many signal overthrows, and obliged them to retire within their borders. In order to transfer to the rising generation the same sort of erudition and accomplishments which he had acquired himself, he opened three schools at Tara; one for instruction in military discipline, a second to teach history, and the other for jurisprudence, or institutes of the laws. From this college was produced the book which is called the "Psalter of Tara;" in which the archives of the country were collected; the series of their Monarchs and provincial Kings preserved; their own times compared with the principal foreign events synchronising with them; the tributes and subsidies of the provincialists due to the Monarchs recorded; and the measure or particular limits of every country, from the province to the district, from the district to the village, and from village to village were ascertained. In this manner did CORMAC consult the grandeur and glory of his administration, and the peace and happiness of his people. In short, in the magnificence of his court, in his benevolence, his prudence, his erudition, and in the fame of his great achievements, he far exceeded all the Monarchs of Ireland that had gone before him.

To what has been already related of the splendour in which he lived, it must be added that he prescribed as a law to himself and his successors in the throne, that every Monarch should have always in his retinue continually attendant upon him, one of the principal nobility, a Druid who was also an Augur, a Judge, a Physician, a Poet, an Antiquary, a Musician, and three officers of his household. The duty of the Nobleman was to be a companion to the King, and to entertain him with conversation suitable to his rank on affairs of state : The business of the Druid was to regulate the concerns of religion, to offer sacrifices, and to divine, or at least pretend to do so, upon all public events : The office of the Judge was to administer justice to the subjects, to publish the laws and customs of the country, and to preside in the courts of judicature in extraordinary cases under the King, who was usually present himself on such occasions : The Physician was to take care of the health of the King and Queen and their children, and to administer medicines to the household : The poet was to transmit to posterity the great heroic actions of famous men of whatever quality and condition, to compose satires upon immorality, and to lash the personal vices of courtiers, and such as were within their knowledge, without partiality and affection : The office of the Antiquary was to preserve the genealogies of the Kings, to correct the regal tables of succession, and to deliver down the pedigrees of every collateral branch of the royal family. He had likewise authority to supervise the genealogies of the nobility, military officers, and gentry, to record the signal heroic deeds of any of them in battle, and to register them in the public archives of the kingdom. The business of the Musician was to play upon his instruments and sing before the King ; when his Majesty had an inclination to lay aside the care of state affairs, and to relax and unbend his mind : The three officers of the household were to provide for his table, to wait upon the Monarch when he eat in public, to govern the inferior officers and servants of the household, and when they were guilty of any offence to dismiss or punish them. These regulations, for the support of the royal dignity and magnificence, were strictly observed for many ages after by his successors, without any addition or alteration ; except
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in the room of a Druid, after the introduction of Christianity, a Bishop was made confessor to the Monarch.

I have said in the beginning of the reign of CORMAC, that he was not to be cleared of all acts of violence, though he has the character of as just and as wise a Monarch as ever ruled in Ireland ; and the following anecdote in his history will justify what I said. The revenues of the crown being not sufficient to maintain such a numerous family as he had, and the magnificence in which he lived, he advised with his treasurer to whom this was known, in what manner he might relieve himself from this distress, and continue to support his usual splendour. A man must be very unfit for the employment of a courtier, that cannot devise expedients to extricate his master out of any difficulties ; especially when he is backed with power to carry them into execution. The treasurer of CORMAC, like other ministers, considering the King's necessities and his will, more than what is reasonable and the law of right, immediately suggested to him, that as there were properly two provinces of Munster and his majesty received tribute but from one, he should demand it for the other ; and in case of refusal, march his army into it, and levy the tribute with his troops.

The treasurer's advice, so agreeable to the King's situation and present sentiments, was no sooner given than taken. CORMAC instantly made a demand of the tribute from the King of Munster, which had been detained from him, he said, unjustly, and a great arrear was due. To this demand, which was received with as much contempt as surprize, the King of Munster replied, that none of the Monarchs of Ireland had ever required an additional tribute from the province, on account of an old division that had been made of it, and he would not distress his subjects by raising new contributions which they had no right to pay. The Monarch, being incensed with this bold refusal, took the other part of his ministers advice ; and with great expedition marched his army into the province of Munster, where he encamped. The provincial King, being not unprepared, sat
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down with his forces in the fight of CORMAC'S camp, not fearing to try the issue of a battle with him.

Into this story there is foisted a very wondrous tale of the skill and enchantments of the Druids in each army ; in order, no doubt, to possess their countrymen with an high opinion and esteem of the power and importance of their holy leaders, as well as to enliven the history with wonder and surprize. At the same time therefore, that we acquit the Bard who invented it in that age of darkness and superstition, we must condemn Dr. KEATING who relates it to us in these days for serious history. Indeed his relating it to us from the ancient records has answered one end ; for which we ought to forgive him : it has furnished us with a proof, from the history of Ireland itself, of the antiquity of that history, and of the existence of letters before the introduction of Christianity. For though in the time of Druidism, it was natural to take every opportunity of displaying the power of that order, yet this was absurd and inconsistent in Christian Annalists, and could not therefore be foisted in by them ; nor the history be the production of later ages, as our candid criticks all seem to contend.

But laying the whole fable aside, what remains of the real story is only this : that the King of Munster being encouraged greatly by his troops, drew them out and offered battle to the Monarch of Ireland ; who distrusting the courage or fidelity of his army, retreated in great disorder, and with the utmost precipitation, without striking a blow. He was however pursued so closely by the Memonians, that he was overtaken, and obliged to capitulate in order to save himself from destruction. He delivered up hostages immediately of some of the chief of his nobility, 'till he had repaired all the losses the people of Munster had sustained from the depredations of his army, during the time they were in the province. In this dishonourable manner ended the expedition of CORMAC into Munster ; from whence the reader will learn, how little sovereign power the Monarchs of Ireland, either had, or could exercise over the provincial Kings. He may learn also, that when ministers advise, and Princes pursue measures disagreeable to their subjects, without a certainty of success, disgrace and disaffection will be the consequence.

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Not long after this defeat, it happened that a person of the first distinction in the kingdom had upon some account or other — not related — fallen into the displeasure of the Monarch of Ireland. Great application was made to restore him again to favour, but in vain. The King remained deaf to all entreaties, till ANGUS, of the royal line, not only interceded for the delinquent, but also offered to become a surety for his fidelity and good conduct in the time to come. The King was moved with the intercession of his favourite ANGUS, and consented to accept of the conditions offered. But this reconciliation, so much desired in general at the court of CORMAC, was very disagreeable to one of his sons; a Prince of strong passions and of very little desert.

What the grounds of his hatred were we are not informed; but regardless of his father's honour and of his own royal birth, the first time that the chief who had been in disgrace appeared at court, under the sanction of CORMAC's pardon, the Prince caused violent hands to be laid upon him, and put out both his eyes. So mean a piece of treachery, in the son of a King whose forgiveness had been announced, must necessarily rouse the spirit of ANGUS who had become responsible for his friend; and who had consequently, in the reconciliation that he had procured, the honour of the Monarch for his safe-conduct. No sooner therefore was he informed of the baseness and barbarity exercised upon his friend, and perhaps suspecting the King himself to have been concerned in it, than he summoned all the forces he had any interest in, and with more resentment than prudence marched instantly to Tara, to chastise the insolence of the Prince, and to do justice to his injured friend.

Whether we suppose CORMAC to have connived at the perfidy of his son or not—for the history is silent in this point—yet we may suppose that he was alarmed at such a precipitate rebellion in a favourite chief, as it was impossible to foresee what it might end in: and we are told, that he collected his troops with all possible expedition, in order to crush it before it should get to a head. But ANGUS, being enflamed with a thirst of vengeance, was too quick for the Monarch; and in his first attempt of violence against the house of Tara, he slew the Prince with his lance as he stood by the

side of his father ; and in the same rencounter, throwing his javelin at the head of the King, he struck out one of CORMAC's eyes. The Monarch, being rather irritated than dismayed with these misfortunes, and having a good force about him, made a terrible slaughter of the troops of ANGUS ; from which the chief himself escaped with difficulty. He was obliged afterwards to take refuge, with his two brothers his confederates, in the court of OLLIOLL OLUM their relation, at that time King of Munster.

CARBR. II.

A. D. 279.

Though CORMAC had thus totally suppressed the rebellion that had been raised against him, yet having lost one of his eyes, and it not being thought decent or propitious in those days for any man to be a Monarch who had a personal blemish, he was contented to deliver up the reins of government, and to retire to a mean little house at Anacoil, in the neighbourhood of the palace of Tara. In this retirement he spent the remainder of his life, which lasted several years ; more happy in himself undoubtedly than amidst all his grandeur and cares of state ; and perhaps not less a friend and benefactor to his people than when he swayed the sceptre. For CORMAC, who was the greatest philosopher of their nation, was perhaps the greatest legislator of all their Kings : And to a man of such a turn of mind, it could not be mortifying nor uneasy, to lay down the hurry and the pomp of royalty, which he must be sated enough with in three and twenty years. On the other hand we may suppose, that it was pleasing to him to enjoy that privacy and leisure, which were adapted to such studies as his genius and inclinations favoured.

Here it was therefore that he drew up “ a Book of Advice to Kings,” for the use of his son CARBRY then his successor on the throne ; which KEATING and O'FLAHERTY mention as extant in their time ; and of which the former says, “ that it was such a testimony of CORMAC's learning and political knowledge, as is worthy to be inscribed in golden characters, for the information of Princes, and as a perfect standard of policy to all ages.” In this retirement, he also wrote a book relating to crimes against the laws ; and assisted in a larger work which treated of the measure of obedience due to Kings ; of wardships, patronages, and privileged places ; of the punishment

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of offenders in the case of blood; and of the forms in which all sorts of pacts and treaties should be reduced into writing. Another part of this work was wrote by CORMAC and revised and added to by his son, and treats of several laws concerning sea and land [a]. Will it be any longer doubted after this, whether the ancient native Irish had any philosophy, literature, or arts in their pagan state? Will any criticks in this country any longer confidently assert, that the Irish had not the use of letters 'till after the arrival of S. PATRICK, and the conversion of the island to Christianity? ought we not rather to take shame to ourselves, that we have hitherto always treated that ancient people with such illiberal contempt; who had the start of the Britons for many ages, in arts and sciences; in learning and in laws?

Important as such subjects as these were in themselves and useful to the state, yet these were not the only subjects which employed the great mind of CORMAC. In the leisure which he enjoyed after his retreat from government, he had an opportunity of giving an unbounded scope to his inquisitive genius; and from studying and observing the ways of men, he was naturally led to contemplate on the works of GOD. With the parts and learning that he was possessed of, it was no wonder that he should discover the errors of paganism; though it was the religion of his country in which he had been educated, and hitherto acquiesced in. As soon as he had convinced himself of the existence of one supreme, omnipotent, and eternal being, he openly exclaimed against the corruptions of the Druids, and their absurd and ridiculous systems of polytheism. He banished all the rites and instruments of idolatry from his house, and applied himself with zeal to improve in the discovery that he had thus happily made. But as this was laying the axe to the root, and directly striking at the authority and the temporal interests of the Druids, so it is easy to conjecture, that the whole order would take the alarm.

Though CORMAC was no longer the monarch of Ireland, yet his influence among the people, whom he had ruled so many years with the greatest

[a] These books, it is well known, were with many others, more ancient as well as modern, relating to their laws, in the collection of Mr. MACPHERBISS of the county of Sligo; who fell a sacrifice to party rage, in the year sixteen hundred and seventy, and whose papers had not a better fate.

ability, must be as considerable as ever; and as his son then filled the throne and would probably imbibe his notions, so it was to be feared, that by violence or persuasion, the religion of the country would be overturned; and if their lives were spared in the first emotions of zeal, which was the best they had to hope for, yet that the order would be extinguished, and their power with it. Under these apprehensions, which were certainly not ill founded, they exerted all their skill to recover CORMAC; and since he refused to come to the worship of the golden calf which they had set up, they brought the idol to him.

Having received intelligence of the time which he used to set apart for his devotions, some of the chief Druids brought it into his presence, and according to their usual custom fell down before it; paying divine honour to it, and entreating CORMAC to join with them. But the King was not to be moved. They demanded therefore to know the reason why he would not continue in the religion of his ancestors, and why he refused to conform to the established worship of the golden calf? he answered, that it was unworthy of a rational being to adore a brute, and much more a log of wood that was fashioned by the workman, who was surely less able to make a God than to create himself; and therefore that he should direct his devotion to that omnipotent and invisible being who made both the workman and the tree.

Having no reply ready to this reasoning, the idol was conveyed away in fullen silence; and upon an after-thought was brought again, dressed out in the most splendid magnificent robes, and ornamented with the richest jewels. The King was then desired to look upon it, and no longer to refuse his worship of a deity thus sumptuously arrayed, and which was the God his fathers had worshipped in that island. But CORMAC had convinced himself of the absurdities of Idolatry, upon principles of reason too just and solid to be shook with their superstitious folly: And had he lived but a little longer, it is probable that Paganism would have been extinct in Ireland before the introduction of Christianity, and that the original theology and patriarchal worship would have been restored. But in the evening of
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that day on which this conversation passed, he was choaked with a bone of the salmon which he had for his supper.

There is nothing marvellous at all in such a death, as the reader must acknowledge : but in order to support the truth of Paganism, to extinguish the errors of CORMAC, and to illustrate the divine authority of the Druids, all the records assure us, that this was effected by their enchantments ; though some of them say, that infernal fiends were raised by the power of the Pagan priests, who set upon the King and strangled him. This is another internal proof of the truth and antiquity of this history, and that it is not the work of later ages. Neither is it to be wondered at, that such a tale should impose upon the Pagan Irish in those days of darkness, when KEATING relates it for matter of fact. In this manner ended the life of the great CORMAC O'CON ; who brought philosophy, law, and learning in Ireland, to as high a pitch perhaps as Heathen lights could afford : And though he did not live long enough to propagate Theism among his countrymen, yet the report of his defection from the established faith had caused doubts and scruples in the minds of many ; which were probably continued through succeeding generations, and so helped to pave the way for the introduction of Christianity. There is a short character given of CORMAC, in an ancient manuscript of undoubted authenticity, as I am informed, which confirms all that has been said of him ; and which, though it falls short of the eloquence and energy of the original, may be thus translated. " CORMAC was magnificent in his liberality : he excelled as a governour, and as a philosopher : a most equitable judge in public ; in private a friend, a companion."

In a work of this kind, it would be unpardonable to omit an account of the Irish Militia, so much celebrated in other nations and histories ; and in the reign of CORMAC, this body of heroes was in the height of their glory and military renown. The name of their chief commander was FINN, the son of COMHALL, mentioned above, who married a daughter of the Monarch's : but this being a gay lady, or it may be having given her heart before to another hero, she soon made an elopement with him, and the

the lovers ended their days in wretchedness and obscurity. Such will always be the fate of connexions that are formed against reason, truth, and honour: and yet so deceitful is the human heart, that scarcely any thing but experience can teach us not to prefer what gladdens it for the present, to what would afterwards afford us a much more real pleasure. The daughter of CORMAC having behaved in a manner so unworthy of herself, her family, and her husband, the King, having another still unmarried, bestowed her upon FINN, as a recompence for her sister's infidelity, with whom he enjoyed all the pleasures of a connubial and domestic life. From this hero, so renowned for philosophy as well as arms, the military corps which he commanded took the name of "Fiana Erion;" and these were the trained bands or standing army of the kingdom.

Many places in the island retain to this day the names of some of the leaders of this famous body of men: and whole volumes of poetical fictions have been grafted upon their exploits. KEATING owns that these sonnets were not intended for real history, but to enliven the work and relieve the reader: The manuscript which I have, after giving a particular account of FINN's descent, his inheritance, his acquisitions from the King of Leinster, and his great military command, immediately adds, "but the reader must not expect to meet here with such stories of him and his heroes as the vulgar Irish have — for they are no other than commanders which their poets penned in after days in their names — but only what I find mentioned of them in their histories". The words of the writer are given for the sake of accuracy; and it is easy to gather from them, that the names of FINN and his heroes having been much celebrated by tradition, some of the Bards who lived when these days of heroism were over, took the names of these champions for the heroes of their sonnets [b]. It would however

[b] The epic poem called Fingal, and published this year, was probably composed in this manner, and mutilated after by the Caledonians, in order to give the honour of its heroes to their own country; or originally composed by a Caledonian Bard with the same intent. Innumerable fables of FINN and his heroes — such as these which are called OSSIAN'S — perhaps not so well and so artfully worked up, abound still among the descendents of that famous people: which yet every one of common sense could distinguish from their chronicles and other monuments of real story.

be very unjust, and contrary to the candour allowed always to such ancient writings, nay it would be contrary to criticism, to reject the authority of the whole relation, on account of some poetical fictions that were only intended to embellish it. Let us turn then to the history of this military establishment; and there are few things at this ancient period in the Irish chronicles which are more worthy of notice.

The constant number of this standing army in times of peace, when there were no disturbances at home, nor any want of their assistance to their allies abroad, were nine thousand men, divided equally into three battalions. But in case of any apprehensions of a conspiracy or rebellion against the Monarch, or if there was any necessity for transporting a body of troops to Scotland in order to defend their allies the Dailriadas, it was in the power of FINN, the Generalissimo, to encrease his forces to seven battalions of three thousand each. Every battalion was commanded by a Colonel; every hundred men by a Captain; an officer in the nature of a Lieutenant was set over every fifty; and a Serjeant resembling the Decurio of the Romans was at the head of every five and twenty. When they were drawn out for action, every hundred men were distributed into ten files, with ten of course in each; and the leader of the file gave the word to the other nine. As it was thought a great honour to be a member of this invincible body of troops, their General was very strict in the qualifications which he insisted upon as essential to an admission in it. These qualifications appear exaggerated by the historians, to a degree of the marvellous, if not impossible; neither are they related clear of confusion and ambiguity. The reader may take the following as the most authentic.

The parents or near relations of every candidate for the militia, were to give security that they would not attempt to revenge his death, but leave it to his fellow soldiers to do him justice. He must have a poetical genius, and be well acquainted at least with the twelve books of poetry. He was to stand at the distance of nine ridges of land with only a stick and target, and nine soldiers were to throw their javelins at him at once, from which he was to defend himself unhurt, or be rejected. He was to run through
a wood

a wood with his hair platted, pursued by a company of the militia, the breadth of a tree only being allowed before them at setting out, without being overtaken or his hair falling loose about him. He was to have a strong arm, and to be able to hold his weapons steady without shaking. He was to leap over a tree as high as his forehead, and easily stoop under another that was as low as his knees. These qualifications being proved, he was then to take an oath of allegiance to the King, and of fidelity to FINN his commander in chief.

The reader will judge of the propriety of most of these qualifications; but this was not every thing that was required, in order for an admission into this illustrious corps. Every soldier, it is said, before he was enrolled, was obliged to subscribe the following articles. That if ever he was disposed to marry, he would not conform to the mercenary custom of requiring a portion with a wife : but without regard to her fortune, he would choose a woman for her virtue her courtesy and good manners : That he would never offer violence to a woman, or attempt to ravish her : That he would be charitable and relieve the poor who desired meat and drink, as far as his abilities would permit : And that he would not turn his back, nor refuse to fight with nine men of any other nation that should set upon him, and offer him violence. These were the terms of being a soldier in the militia of Ireland under FINN ; and whilst these were insisted upon and observed, the body was invincible ; a terror to rebels at home, and to enemies abroad.

In the times of profound peace, they were required to defend the inhabitants against the attempts of thieves and robbers ; to quell riots and insurrections ; to levy fines, and secure estates that were forfeited for the use of the crown ; in short to suppress all seditions and traitorous practices in their beginning ; and to appear under arms when any breach of the peace or emergencies of the state required it. They had no subsistence money from the Monarchs but during the winter half year, when they were billeted upon the country and dispersed in quarters. During the other part of the year, from the first of May to November, they were encamped about the fields, and were obliged to fish and hunt for their support. This was not only a great ease to the Monarch and his subjects, but it inured the troops to
fatigue,

fatigue, preserved them in health and vigour, and accustomed them to lie abroad in the field : and in a country which abounded so much with venison, fish, and fowl as Ireland did, it was no other hardship than was proper to the life of soldier, to be obliged to draw their subsistence in the summer season from those articles.

They made but one meal in four and twenty hours, which was always in an evening ; and besides the common method of roasting their meat before the fire, they had another, very remarkable, which they seem most to have practised. The places which they chose to encamp in were always in the neighbourhood of water ; where great fires were made in order to heat some large stones for foddening of their meat. Here large pits were dug, into which they threw a layer of stones when they were red hot, and then a layer of flesh covered up in sedges or rushes ; then another course of stones and another of flesh, 'till the pit was full, or their quantity of meat was finished. While their food was stewing in this manner, they washed their heads and necks and other parts of their bodies, 'till they had cleansed themselves from the sweat and dust occasioned by their hunting ; and this contributed as much to take off their fatigue as it did to promote their health and cleanliness. When they were dressed, and their meat was ready, they began their meal by uncovering the pits and taking out their food ; of which they eat very large quantities with great cheerfulness and sociability.

If their exercise had led them, as it often did, to too great a distance to return to their camp, as soon as dinner was ended they erected little temporary tents or booths, in which their beds were laid out and constructed with great exactness. Next the ground were placed the smallest branches of trees, upon which was strewed a large quantity of moss from some of the adjacent woods or bogs, and over all were strewed bundles of rushes which made a very commodious lodging ; and which in the old manuscripts are called "the three beds of the Irish militia". The marks of their fires continue deep in the earth in many parts of the island to this day : and when the husbandman turns up any black burnt earth with his plow, as they of-

tendo, he immediately knows the occasion of it; and even now that soil is called by the name of "Fulacht Finn." The militia were as much under discipline when encamped thus in the summer as when they were in quarters; and they were at stated times obliged to perform their military exercise. Besides these regulations for the army, the celebrated FINN, who was as great a philosopher as a general, drew up several axioms of jurisprudence, which were incorporated into the celestial judgments for the government of the state. I shall now resume the thread of the narration.

Though CORMAC lived seven years after he had resigned the crown, yet I chose to give the history of him entire till his death, as it was but short, rather than to break it into pieces; especially since it was unconnected, and the different dates, if they could have been ascertained, would be totally immaterial. Whether this Monarch insisted upon his son's succeeding him in the throne, or whether he waved his pretensions in favour of ACHY GUNAD, the history does not inform us: it only tells us that he was his successor, and before the end of the year that he was assassinated, when CARBRY LIFFEAR the son of CORMAC became Monarch of Ireland. But what the historians have left in this obscurity my manuscript hath cleared up. It is there said, that CORMAC resigned the reins of government to his son, who executed the kingly office 'till the death of his father; when ACHY GUNAD, of the line of HEREMON, assumed the crown, which he possessed about a year. This account has all the appearance of probability, and it is not contradicted by any of those which are printed.

How it happened that CARBRY had not interest or power enough to retain the crown at his father's death, which he had been in possession of at least as a deputy for seven years, all accounts are silent. But perhaps it is a conjecture authorised by the times and their form of government, that ACHY was the Roydamna chose, in the life of CORMAC, to be his successor on the throne; and this conjecture will solve the difficulty. We must however be content with what we meet with: and though the secret motives and springs of action are the life of history, yet these are not to be looked for in old annals; which—as I have said in the Preface—were only portable extracts made from the larger works in their archives, easily to be circulated,
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and frequently copied, and have been therefore preserved through all revolutions. The reasons of state which determine the actions of princes, or their private passions which perhaps do it much more frequently, are sometimes to be collected from the ruling manners, the genius of the times, or some prominent figures, which enable us to trace the rest: and where this is done, without refinements unsupported by facts, it distinguishes the historian from the annalist; but where it cannot be done, though the historian may be pitied, yet he is not to be blamed. We are now in one of those conjunctures; and the reader must therefore take things as he finds them.

To whatsoever cause it was owing that CARBRY LIFFECAR did not continue to hold the reins of government which he had in his hands at the death of his father, it is very certain that he resumed them within a year, when ACHY GUNAD was killed. The philosophical education which CORMAC had given his son was not without effect. He revised the books of laws, improved, and added to them: neither in his personal conduct did he shew himself unworthy of his great descent. In the reign of this Monarch, the Irish had first the name of Scots, and their country Scotia, given them by the Britons; the reason of which has been assigned in the Introduction: and notwithstanding the several attempts of many historians of North Britain, to prove these names to be meant of their first progenitors, yet their best writers allow, that their descent and origine was from Ireland, and that their own country was called "Scotia minor" to distinguish it from Ireland, which had the name of "Scotia major". Notwithstanding the great qualifications and the prudent administration of the reigning Monarch, yet he was not without his troubles. After the death of FINN, the great General of the militia, his family fell into great dissensions; probably on a competition for that command, because his father and grandfather had it before him. But this is only conjecture. The one side had a powerful ally in the King of Connaught, and the other side, at the head of which was OSSIAN the son of FINN, was protected by his sister's husband, the King of Munster.

A.D. 279.

Whatever was the occasion of their difference, it raged with great violence for several years, and at last produced a civil war. The Ossian faction,

for some reason or other, had revolted from the Monarch, who made the King of Connaught his General ; and therefore CARBRY, tho' OSSIAN was his nephew, took the side against him. The quarrell was too great, notwithstanding their near alliances, to be decided any other way than by arms ; which each side prepared for with their utmost force. The fatal battle was joined at Gabra, in which the Monarch was slain and the King of Connaught wounded on one side ; and the King of Munster and OSCAR the son of OSSIAN were killed on the other. Thus fell CARBRY LIFFECAR, a wise and valiant Prince, after filling the throne of Ireland seventeen years with great honour. The two sons of MAC-CON succeeded him, reigning with equal power ; which the Antiquaries considering as an oligarchy, have excluded these heroes from the number of their Monarchs ; neither was their reign of a year's duration : for the younger brother fell by the hands of the elder, who did not choose a partner on the throne ; and the elder was soon deposed and slain in battle by the militia of the kingdom, as being of the line of ITH.

FIACHA II.

A.D. 297.

The successor to the crown, after this short interruption, was FIACHA SRABTINE the son of CARBRY LIFFECAR of the old Heremonian stock ; and who, notwithstanding some uneasinesses created him by his brother's sons, sat upon the throne of his ancestors thirty years. He had married a daughter of a Prince of Wales, by whom he had a son of eminent virtues and valour, and who in the life time of his father became a King of Connaught ; whose name was MUREDACH TIREACH. He discovered a military genius in his early youth : and having applied himself constantly to martial studies in times of peace, and taking the field upon all occasions in which the troops were employed in action, he soon acquired those abilities which experience can only teach ; and his renown was answerable to his merit. This acquired him the post of King of Connaught, as well as Generalissimo of his father's army. In this command he acquitted himself against the King of Munster, with equal capacity, bravery, and success. The higher his reputation rose in arms, the more he became endeared to his father ; who did him all the honours, and gave him all the emoluments, that was in his power.

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The favourite of a Monarch must necessarily have his enemies, let his merit be ever so great, or his conduct ever so unexceptionable; and next to the station of a Monarch itself is of all stations in life the least to be envied. But if a favourite should be — as sometimes favourites have been — of no merit, of small abilities, and of a conduct haughty and reproachable, how much soever their creatures may flatter them, or how much soever they may flatter themselves, they will soon get a tumble, or their master must be content to perish with them. Of this we have many instances in the English history; which shews us that nothing but their own experience will teach men to prefer their real good to the views of avarice or ambition. But in the case before us, the favourite was the Son of the Monarch; not a subject equalled or surpassed by a hundred others in merit and pretensions; a General of consummate abilities and unparalleled success, to whom the royal favour in its utmost extent, one would think, could not be repined at; a General and a Prince too, who had very greatly served, if he had not absolutely saved the state: And yet what pains were taken to rob him of his fair fame, to misrepresent his best actions, and to exaggerate those that were the least prudent! In short nothing less would satisfy his enemies than his own or his father's ruin.

FIACHA had reigned now thirty years in great tranquillity: and though we read of no great improvements made in law or government in his time, yet we read of no oppression nor misrule. Scenes of public action, conquest, and military glory, are indeed the scenes which enliven history the most of any; but they are not the scenes in which wise and good men would choose to pass away their lives. It was greatly and humanely said by SCIPIO, that he had rather save the life of a single citizen than destroy a thousand enemies; and the expression has been celebrated in all ages since. The reign of this Monarch therefore, though for the most part still and peaceful, yet was happy to himself and all his subjects. The great favour shewn his son, and the prodigious honours which the Prince acquired, were objects of too much envy for wicked men to bear. At the head of their enemies were the three COLLA's, sons of the Monarch's brother, to whom all the praises
given

given to MUREDACH were as so many stabs in the heart ; and of whose power, if he should succede his father, they had no small apprehensions, on account of some indignities which in their malice they had put upon him. Animated with these sentiments they formed a conspiracy with some of the King's officers and other Chiefs of their own train, to destroy the Monarch and his son and seize on the crown themselves. I omit the tale of a Druid's prophecy on this occasion ; given evidently by the Irish Bard to raise their credit among the people, and copied by KEATING very gravely. The King being informed of the treachery of his nephews, and being then at the head of some of his troops, fought the enemy and gave them battle. But as the battle is not always to the strong nor favour to men of skill, so the Monarch lost his life, and the eldest COLLA succeeded him on the throne. The great merit, the fame, and the just pretensions of the Prince, who was extremely irritated at this conspiracy, made the throne uneasy to COLLA the whole time he possessed it. But at the end of four years, the Prince attacked him with such a superior force that he drove the three COLLA's and three hundred of their principal followers into Albania ; their mother being a Princess of that country. This, I believe, is the first instance of a Monarch of Ireland being deposed without losing his life ; and the reason of this we are not told in any other manner.

MUREDACH
A. D. 331.

The superior genius of MUREDACH having thus obtained him the full possession of the throne, he set himself about establishing the general tranquillity and the public happiness. These he effected with great success ; and his care of government was repaid in the reputation and esteem which he acquired among his people. Before three years were expired, the COLLA's, his kinsmen, who had rebelled against his father and been the occasion of his death, either tired of the court and country of Albania, or desiring to end their days in their native land, were determined to put every thing to the hazard as to their future lot. But in order to convince the Monarch that they came with no ill intention, but rather threw themselves upon his mercy, they were attended with less than thirty of their followers who had lived in exile with them.

They no sooner landed on the Irish coast, than they marched directly to the palace where the Monarch had his residence. Having made a proper submission and acknowledgment of their fault, the King received them courteously, congratulated them on their return, and assured them that if their conduct merited his favour, they should find the good effects of it. For what was past, he told them, that as clemency was one of the brightest jewels in the crowns of Princes, he should forgive them, and leave their punishment to the Gods and their own reflexion. The Princes, being surpris'd and charmed with such a reception, were determined to wipe off their past disgrace by the most unexceptionable behaviour ; and after a short trial of their sincerity, the Monarch gave them appointments suitable to their rank, and the former commands which they had in the army.

In these posts of trust and honour the COLLA's continued for some years, enjoying and meriting the Monarch's favour : But as these appointments were only temporary and each of the Princes had a family, the King recommended to them to consider of some provision to be made for their children, when they themselves should be taken out of the world. He not only assured them that they might always depend upon his assistance, but he also offered them a number of his troops to effectuate any attempts which they should make in order to obtain a settlement for their descendents. The difficulty was to find out a country to which they had any pretence ; for they had no title to any possessions warranted by law, and they had no quarrel subsisting with any of the provincial sovereigns that could give a colour to a rupture with them. But as the heads of Princes are very fruitful of invention on such occasions, and their hearts make no resistance, it was soon recollected that the province of Ulster had formerly put a great indignity on their family, in the person of CORMAC one of their ancestors ; whose beard they had infamously burnt at a public feast, and whom they banished afterwards out of the province. This offence, it is true, was near an hundred years ago, in which neither the present King nor inhabitants of Ulster had any share ; and could not therefore in equity be made to suffer

suffer for it. But equity, we know, is seldom the law of Princes in their invasions ; and therefore it was determined to push for a conquest in that province.

This unjust expedition was no sooner determined than it was prepared for ; and the monarch having furnished them with an army of seven thousand, which was joined by some Dannonians out of Conaught, the COLLA's invaded Ulster. The King of that province, having had notice of the preparations that were made against him, was not entirely unprovided for his defence. As soon as the two armies met, a bloody battle ensued, which the close of day did not decide ; but the field was left to the three brothers. The next day the King offered battle again to the victors without success, and without being defeated himself. In this manner the contest continued for several days, 'till at last a terrible slaughter having been made of the King's troops, in which he fell himself, the remainder of his army immediately quitted the field, intending to save themselves by flight ; but were pursued with such fury and carnage by the victors, that scarce any of the provincial forces escaped the sword. Sated with this bloodshed, and intoxicated with their success, the COLLA's marched directly to Eamania the palace of the Ulster Kings ; which, as soon as they had plundered, they set on fire. In a people who intended the conquest of the province as a settlement for themselves and their posterity, the destruction of this palace—which, the reader has been told in the Introduction, was the only piece of architectonical magnificence then in the island — which had subsisted almost seven hundred years, and which might be of the same use to them as to their predecessors, seems a strange infatuation ; and to be accounted for only by that savage fierceness inspired by blood and victory, which extinguishes or overpowers reason in the human mind. When the brothers had made a thorough conquest of the country, they divided it among them to their mutual satisfaction, and to the content of those who were their chief followers.

Whether any advantage was taken of the absence of the army of MUREDACH by some of his enemies, or whether this invasion of Ulster, which

which he had projected and assisted in, was resented by some of his subjects—as it is highly reasonable to suppose—we are not told; we are at a loss, therefore, to account for his death in battle by the hands of COLBACH his successor, of the Irian line, after a peaceful reign of five and twenty years. His death however was revenged in less than a year on COLBACH, by his son ACHY MOIMEDIN; of whom we find little more than that he held the monarchy for eight years; that by a Welch Princess which he had for a second wife, he became the father of NIAL, who will hereafter make a considerable figure upon the throne; that he had a battle with the King of Leinster, and that he died at Tara.

To this Monarch succeeded CRIMTHAN, of the line of HEBER, who enjoyed the crown thirteen years; and who was memorable for his expeditions into Gaul and Britain, which paid him tribute, and from whence he brought several prisoners and a great booty. That Gaul and Britain were tributaries to the Irish Monarch, may be justly doubted, I believe, if not denied; and KEATING, who is the only historian that affirms it, affirms it on the authority of an ancient poem, which yet, from his own quotation of it, will not support his affirmation; the poem only relating, as an instance of CRIMTHAN's valour, "That the Britons and Gauls paid him homage and " confessed his sway." The Picts indeed, had for a long time been tributaries to the Monarchs of Ireland; and these CRIMTHAN took as his auxiliaries on this expedition; but they paid dearly for the assistance which they had given him. For on the ravages committed by this Monarch in Britain, the Roman general, THEODOSIUS the elder, was sent thither to the assistance of their allies; who routed and drove the Picts out of the Roman province, and having recovered all their plunder, delivered it to the proprietors. The enemy being thus retired beyond the two Friths, he fortified the neck of land which divided them; and making a fifth province of the country they deserted, gave it the name of Valentia, in honour of VALENTINIAN, at that time Emperor.

CRIMTH.II.
A. D. 366.

It is probable, if CRIMTHAN had lived a little longer, that he would have revenged the cause of his allies the Picts; for it is on all sides allowed, that the Irish were at this time some of the best troops in Europe. But the

Monarch's sister, as all historians agree, being ambitious to put the scepter into the hands of her favourite son, gave her brother a cup of poison; which, in order to prevent any suspicion, she first tasted herself, but tasting of it too largely, she fell into the snare she had laid, and perished by it, as well as CRIMTHAN. But notwithstanding all the historians agree in this circumstance of his death, I must not conceal that it is somehow or other an evident blunder. They tell us, that this sister was the first wife of ACHY MOIMODIN, by whom she had this favourite son, and whom CRIMTHAN succeeded on the throne: They also tell us, that she died before her husband; and yet, by this account, she must either have survived him thirteen years during the reign of CRIMTHAN, and must have been the second instead of the first wife of ACHY, or else it is impossible that she could thus have poisoned her brother. A mistake there is somewhere, it is very evident; and to me it appears probable, it is in placing her as the first, and not as the second wife of the former Monarch; because the sons of the first Queen, as CRIMTHAN had no issue, would probably be preferred before those by the second; and NIALI, who succeeded, they all allow to have been the son of ACHY, by his Queen, a British Princess.

NIALI I. NIALI, afterwards distinguished by the name of the "Nine Hostages," of the old Heremonian line, was no sooner in possession of the throne of his ancestors, than he sought to carry the terror of his arms abroad, and to prove himself worthy of his great descent. The first occasion which he had given him for it, was to assist their brethren the Dalriada in Albania, against the ravages and incursions of the Picts. When the King arrived in that country, he changed its name to Scotia Minor, at the request of the Dalriada's themselves; in order to preserve their origine and descent from Ireland, then as often called by the name of Scotia Major. Indeed so many colonies of the Irish invaded Albania from time to time, and obtained possessions and settlements in that country, that it would be endless to recite them all; from whence it appears that the principal of the Scottish families were originally descended from the ancient Irish; to whom they owe the nobility of their blood, and the lustre and eminence of their families. To confirm this, I will quote the testimony of their own historian BUCHANNAN, in the room of several others that might be produced to the same purpose:

Since

“ Since the natives of Ireland, and the colonies sent from thence into Scotland, were originally called Scots, in order to distinguish between the Irish and these Scots, they began to call those transplanted Irish by the name of Albanian-Scots.” Must we not conclude then, that a history of the ancient state of Ireland is necessary for understanding the history of the Scots? Must we not conclude farther, that these people are of all others — except the natives of the ancient stock — the most concerned in the vindication of the letters, polity, laws, and military glory of Ireland before the conquest? I think we must. But I shall now return to the history.

In the ninth year of the reign of NIALL, he transported a numerous army into Scotland, in order to be joined with the forces of that country, and with the Picts whom he had reconciled; and marching this formidable body into Britain, they devastated the country in a most horrible manner. From hence he carried them into Armorica, now called Bretanny; where they plundered the inhabitants, and made prey of two hundred children of some of the best families in that province, which they brought home with their other spoil. Among these, it is said, was PATRICK, afterwards the great Apostle of the Irish, then sixteen years of age; and it was a custom of the Irish to bring away captives from the places which they invaded, as witnesses of their success, and to grace their triumph. NIALL, being encouraged by the number of his captives, and the success of his arms in France, resolved upon a second expedition; but not thinking his own army sufficient of itself for such an enterprize, he concerted measures with the general of the Scots, to join him upon the Gallic coast, and to share the invasion and the plunder with the Irish. All the preparations being made, his eager troops embarked on board the transports; and having a fair wind, they were in a few days landed near the banks of the river Loire in Gaul. Here the general of the Dalriada's, now called Scots, found their ally; and the two armies being joined, they committed hostilities so dreadful, that the inhabitants were obliged to forsake their houses and their effects, and to flee into woods and caves, to avoid the cruelty of the invaders.

Whilst the two armies were thus iniquitously employed, the end of NIALL, who commanded them, was approaching in a manner that he little thought

of. But in order to explain this to the reader, it is necessary that I should go a little back in his history. The son of a King of Leinster, perceiving that NIALL did not occupy the palace at Tara at his first mounting the throne, as all his predecessors usually did, and being a Prince of great ambition, and perhaps thinking it might pave the way to the throne itself, he took it in his head, without any knowledge or consent of NIALL, to possess himself of the royal palace. A week or more passed before the Monarch had any notice of this invasion of his property by ECHAD the Prince of Leinster; nor was it till after many disputes and skirmishes that the invader would relinquish his possession. But what greatly aggravated his offence, and increased the resentment of the Monarch against him, was his murdering the son of a favourite Druid of NIALL's, for some slight affront, whilst the Prince was entertained at the father's house, and even in his sight. After this he made his escape to Scotland, where he lived in exile till this expedition into Gaul.

Whether he meditated a revenge on NIALL at the time that he desired the general of the Scots to let him have a command, or whether the Monarch's behaviour afterwards suggested the thought of it, we are not informed. Be this then as it may. As he was a Prince of a royal house, and an intimate acquaintance of GABRAN's the chief commander of the Scots, he had no difficulty in being appointed to go on this expedition; nor was the General wanting in a warm recommendation of him to the forgiveness of the Monarch. But all his interest with NIALL availed nothing: the King was so much incensed against the Prince of Leinster, that instead of receiving him into favour, he would not hear of him, nor suffer him to be in his presence. It is probable that this inveteracy might first inspire him with the design which he soon found means to execute. Perceiving the Monarch sitting on the banks of the river Loire, as the troops were one day ranging about the country; he got under the cover of a grove on the opposite shore, and, discharging an arrow at the Monarch, shot him dead upon the spot. The expedition being totally disconcerted by this accident, so favourable for the inhabitants, the armies reembarked, and returned home to their different countries.

Thus

Thus ended the great exploits and the life of NIALL of the nine hostages; a name given to this Monarch, it is said, because he brought away hostages from so many different regions. But this must not be understood of so many different countries, but of so many places in which his arms had been successful; as Pictland, England, Wales, Armorica, and other parts of Gaul. The posterity of this King appropriated the Monarchy in a manner so much to themselves, that almost all the following Monarchs of Ireland were descended from him; besides many families of great renown, and many powerful Princes in them. He had pushed the glory of his subjects higher, and extended it further abroad, than any King of Ireland had done before him; and he had a peaceful reign at home of twenty seven years to do it in. But his death is a lesson to Princes and great men, that they should not be implacable in their resentments; which may be always returned upon them to their own destruction. For the life of the greatest is in the power of the meanest man, if he is wicked and resolute enough to take it.

When the army brought home the news of the Monarch's assassination, DATHY.
 DATHY grandson to ACHY MOIMODUIN was elected to the throne, as being a A. D. 405.
 Prince of the Heremonian line. He is said to have governed the kingdom three and twenty years: and yet no other account is given than of his marriages and his descendants, except that pursuing his conquests in Gaul where his arms had been very successful, he received his death by a thunderbolt near the foot of the Alps, and his body was brought home by his men and interred in Ireland. This being the last of the Pagan Monarchs before the introduction of Christianity, we are now arrived at the end of the second age, which I have called the Obscure; and it naturally puts a period to this book.

Obscure however as it is allowed to be, yet I have taken such care to select the authentic from the fabulous part of its history, as that I persuade myself there are no impositions upon the reader in this work. So far from delivering impossible tales, either to amuse and surprise the credulous, or to throw a lustre and antiquity over the Irish history, here is nothing but what is possible at least; nothing indeed but what is probable, if we judge
of

of this history, with the same candour and impartiality as we do of all the histories of other ancient nations : and why Ireland, which is a member of our own dominions, should not meet with the same fairness of mind from English criticks which they shew to Greece and Rome, to China or to Russia, is a matter of just astonishment. I am afraid it is to be placed only to the account of pride ; that since we in England have no certain history before the invasion of the Romans, we will not allow that a people subject to us, and originally transplanted from us, shall in this respect be superior to ourselves. If it is not pride, which hath occasioned our partiality against the Irish history, it must be a childish prejudice of education, which it is time for us to lay aside ; and which though no wise men will acknowledge, yet the wisest men are not always free from. But whatever may be the fate of this history, it is certainly very shameful, to be learned in the accounts of other countries, and to be ignorant of those which belong to our own.



T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

I R E L A N D.

B O O K VI.

THE obscure age of the Irish history, which we have just concluded, it is to be hoped, hath been rescued from that national contempt which we in this country have hitherto entertained of it: and if it is not enlivened with as many important interesting events as that of some other ancient nations, yet perhaps it affords as much political instruction to a free people in the use of liberty, as we can meet with any where else; and, which ought moreover to recommend it to us, it is the history of a country which is now annexed to the British empire. The third age of the Irish, which we are now to enter upon, I have called “the Enlightened”; because the facts of history are better authenticated, and the dates of the events are more accurately ascertained, than in the age preceding. Even those who criticise their antiquities with the most severity, allow a credit is to be given

LOGARY II.

A. D. 428.

to their historical accounts from their conversion to Christianity : and it would be no stretch of candour, in my opinion, to say further, that the colouring of history is then too strongly laid, to admit of the least doubt of their having letters and arts in no mean degree antecedently to that period.

The reader must not however imagine, that, because I have called this the enlightened age, he is to be entertained with those events which alone make history edifying and important : it is rather in general more barren of those facts which best reward the labours of an historian, than the age before it. For tho' Christianity opened a new scene in Ireland, and the lustre of history shines brighter as it descends into more particulars, yet a bad taste for writing prevailed at that time all over Europe : and though the materials for history were probably very plentiful, yet the great waste made by the Danes at first, and afterwards by the English, in the annals and archives of Ireland, on political motives, hath left us little enough of this period, which may be deemed important or entertaining. Nor is the reader to imagine that there are no fables now, notwithstanding the acknowledged authenticity of the history, either to shake its credit—if those should shake it—or to puzzle the historian, and encrease his labour. The fables here are as numerous and as improbable, but less entertaining than those in the age preceding. They were written by Monks in cells and cloisters : men of a different stamp and genius from the ancient Bards, and they had a different cause to support ; not the cause of heroes engaged in war, but the cause of saints advancing piety with a mixture of superstition, and a pretended power of working miracles. But let us now enter upon the history.

MS.
KEATING.
O FLAHER.
Dissertat.
WARE.
CAMDEN.
USHER.
COMERF.
HARRIS.

As soon as an account was brought to Ireland of the death of DATHY near the Alps, LAOGARY the son of the great hero NIALl was elected Monarch. Though the reader has heard nothing of any attempts towards learning or propagating Christianity before this Prince's reign, yet it must not be concluded, that it had not found its way into this island. The theological Doctrine, which the philosophic genius and the retirement of CORMAC had led him to discover, though he did not live long enough to get it established, yet had paved the way to a free enquiry among all thinking men. The mind being once at liberty under its own direction, and no longer

longer fettered or hood-winked by authority, formed a system for itself: and under this private system every one sat quiet, until the time should come, that the bulk of the people might be safely taught by slow degrees to see their error and to forsake it.

The great power of the Druids, and the implicit subjection under which they held the people, were shaken so much by CORMAC, that from the time of his death they were merely permitted to perform the functions of religion, as ministers, not as dictators; and even their former character was without the reverence which had till then been annexed to it. The Pagan religion in Ireland having but little hold left on the minds of men, they were open almost to any impressions that other systems might make: and many of their philosophers, who did not choose to interrupt the public tranquillity by opposing the established doctrines, and yet could not content themselves with living under them and enjoying privately their own opinions, forsook their country for those regions in which Christianity was professed. Several of these went to Rome, became the disciples of St. PETER, and were afterwards ordained and promoted to dignities in foreign churches. Many remained at home, and with letters and humanity taught the doctrines of the Gospel in obscure secluded places.

It is probable that a reformation would sooner have become more public and general by those means than it did, if the attention of the nation had not been drawn off from subjects of this nature by the foreign wars, which CRIMTHAN and his successors engaged them in. The celebrated CATHILL, toward the end of the second century, we are told by several foreign writers cited by USHER [a], was Archbishop of RACHAU, in the province of Munster, and that he converted the province to the Faith of CHRIST, with the assistance of twelve suffragan Bishops, whom he ordained. It must be owned that the Irish histories say nothing of such an event; and notwithstanding the many authorities cited by the Primate for it, one cannot help suspecting that there must be some mistake. The mistake indeed, I believe, is not in the fact, but in the date; and the writers which the Primate cites are much divided in their opinions about the time in which CATHILL lived.

[a] De Brit. Eccl. Primord. p. 751—60.

There is no doubt however to be made, that several of the learned Irish had received the Christian Faith before the reign of the present Monarch, who made a great figure abroad in the highest stations of the Church; and it seems agreed among all the Irish writers, that, before PATRICK or PALLADIUS, there were four Bishops in Ireland, who preached the gospel and made many converts to CHRIST. These are canonized by their biographers under the names of S. ALBE, S. DECLAN, S. IBER, and S. KIRIAN. Before these, it is reported in the life of the former, that one CHRISTIANUS a Priest, was sent hither from Rome many years before S. PATRICK, in order to plant the Christian faith among the Gentile Irish. What these old writers meant by the epithet of BISHOP, it is not an easy thing to determine. But it does not appear to me, that they had precisely the same idea of that character, which in latter ages hath been affixed to it; for it is certain that their Bishops had not the same extended power and jurisdiction which more modern times have given them. Be this however as it may.—To the four Bishops above-mentioned, the writers of their lives have attributed many excellencies and virtues, great diligence and travel; and had they attributed nothing else, they would probably find credit to what they have written. But according to the humour of those times, such good men as these must have an extraordinary interest in heaven; and many miracles which required the power of heaven are attributed to them.

In the third year of the reign of LOGARY, PALLADIUS was sent from Rome by Pope CELESTINE, “to the Irish believing in CHRIST.” Our own historians, as well as theirs, and many foreign authors, agree in this event; and they call him the first Bishop that was thus sent. Hence a question hath arisen, how PALLADIUS could be called the first Bishop that was sent, if we admit that the Irish had received the Christian Faith before his time from the four Bishops above-mentioned. In answer to this it hath been observed, that in the first primitive Church the office of Bishops and Priests, and their names, were common; but in the second they both began to be distinguished. BALE informs us, that he was sent by CELESTINE to institute the order of Priests after the Roman manner; because, before this time, the Irish had their own Bishops and Ministers, elected according to sacred writ by the suffrages

of the people, as they had seen among the Britons; but this did not please the Romans. USHER, who gives us this account, was himself inclined to believe, that as the four Bishops were in Ireland before the mission of PALLADIUS, or the pontificate of CELESTINE, that this epithet means only the first Bishop sent by that Pope who sent PATRICK after; or else that he was appointed to the first see in point of dignity; as, although they had other Bishops, PALLADIUS was the first Archbishop, and PATRICK the second, to whom the others should submit. The first of the Primate's explanations is natural, the other seems forced, if not absurd; but the reader may take which of all he likes the best; for as the question is not important, the solution is immaterial.

The Pope having been informed of the Pagan state of Ireland, by such of the learned natives as had repaired to Rome for erudition, sent PALLADIUS with twelve assistants to preach the gospel to the Irish. In a short time after their arrival, which was in the province of Leinster, the Bishop found means to erect three Churches for Christian worship, which he consecrated. But for want of skill in the language, or for want of spirit to withstand the brutal fierceness of some Pagan chiefs, the mission of this ecclesiastick had little other success. As he and his coadjutors were endeavouring to make proselytes, and to spread their doctrine, they were violently attacked by one of the sons of a Pagan Prince, a furious zealot, who had the principal command in that part of the country; and such a powerful opposition, where they were without friends or acquaintance, obliged them in a short time to give up their design, and to quit the island in order to save their lives. The Bishop however did not live to return to Rome; but died in his journey among the Picts, in the first year of his mission. Little more is said of the other Bishops, the natives of the country who were here before, than that they confined their labours to particular places; in which, though their success was not inconsiderable, yet they were very far from converting the generality of the people. This great work was reserved for S. PATRICK, called from hence the great Apostle of the Irish; though not the first, as the reader sees, who introduced among them the Christian Faith.

It has already been related in the reign of NIALL, that PATRICK was born in Britain; and it was in that part which is now comprehended in Scotland, called after him Kirk Patrick. He was the son of a deacon and the grandson of a priest; which evidently proves that the clergy were not restrained from matrimony in those early ages of the church. In his sixteenth year, as it hath been said, he was taken captive in Armerioa, where his whole family were on a visit to some of the relations of his mother. When he was brought into Ireland and sold for a slave, his business was constantly to attend and feed the hogs. In this captivity, and in this servile employment, he continued till the seventh year, when according to the law in that respect he was discharged. When he had been at home with his parents about two years, he was surprised, he says in the account he gives of himself, one night in a dream, with a man coming to him as if from Ireland with a great number of letters; in one of which he saw these words, "The voice of the Irish," and in the same moment he thought he heard the inhabitants near the Western sea crying out to him with one voice, "We entreat thee, holy youth, to come and walk among us"; with the noise of which he awoke. From this time, says the history of his life, he formed the resolution of converting the Irish to Christianity; and immediately went abroad into foreign parts to enrich his mind with knowledge and learning.

But if PATRICK really formed such a resolution at this time, it is plain he was not in haste to put it in execution: for besides thirty five years that he spent in his studies with his uncle a Bishop of Tours, who ordained him Deacon, and after his death with Bishop GERMANUS who ordained him priest, he was for some time at Rome among the canons of the Lateran church, as well as with a colony of Monks in some islands in the Tuscan sea. Upon the whole, it was no less than eight and thirty years after the dream he mentions, that St. PATRICK returned to Ireland, in order to convert it from its Pagan state. Let the reader judge therefore, whether this return was owing to the compassion which he was touched with at their ignorance when he was in captivity,

tivity, and that this impulse to convert them was heightened by his dream. It is differing from all the writers on this subject to say otherwise ; but yet I must confess that I presume to differ from them, and to assert that he probably thought no more of Ireland, after he once began his travels, 'till the time that he went to Rome to be consecrated for his mission. But if the occasion of this mission was the impulse we are told of in his youth about forty years before, we may observe what great events are sometimes owing to trifling incidents ; and that the designs of providence are brought about by means, which in the eye of human wisdom are of no consideration.

Whether PATRICK had been informed of the ill success and death of PALLADIUS at that time, and whether GERMANUS advised him to resume his former design of converting the Irish — as the writers of his life assure us — it may be as difficult perhaps for us to know, as it is by whom he was consecrated a Bishop, which they are not at all agreed in. At Rome however it is probable that he received his consecration ; and from thence, it is said, that he brought with him twenty disciples or assistants that were eminent for their piety and learning. With these he arrived in Cornwall ; and preaching there for a few days — and as some say in Wales — he increased his attendants to the number of thirty four ; with whom he passed over safely into Ireland in the sixtieth year of his age, and landed in the port of Wicklow. The first fruits of the Prelate's ministry, which he soon began, we are told, after his landing, being well skilled in the Irish language, was the conversion and baptism of SINELL, a chief of that country, and the eighth in a lineal descent from the Monarch CORMAC. The report of this conversion was soon brought to NATHI, the Pagan Prince who had driven away PALLADIUS ; and he was not wanting in his opposition to Bishop PATRICK : but the Bishop stood his ground 'till a strong party of Pagans — excited probably by the Prince — attacked him and his company, and drove them back again to their ship.

Having more courage and resolution however than his predecessor, he did not shrink from his undertaking. From this place therefore he sailed to

and

an island on the coast of the county of Dublin — called “Holm Patrick” from him at this day — where he rested with his attendants a little time, and thence went into that part of the province of Ulster, which is called Ullagh, in the counties of Down and Antrim. So large a company landing from one ship, and all of them being foreigners, alarmed the inhabitants, who immediately pronounced them pirates. Intelligence of this being brought to DICHU, a Chief in that country, he raised a body of forces with all possible expedition, in order to destroy or drive them away from the coast. But finding them unarmed, and being struck with the venerable appearance of the Bishop and some of his friends, his indignation was turned into curiosity; and he desired to know the errand on which they came. As soon as the Prelate had informed him of his great design, and had DICHU’s leave to explain the nature and principles of Christianity, he preached the gospel in such a forcible and zealous manner, that the Chief and all his family were in a short time converted and baptized. Nor was this all; for the land upon which his conversion was wrought he dedicated to God, where as soon as he could he built a church.

It is not the business of this history to follow Bishop PATRICK in all his perambulations about the island to propagate the Christian faith. The particulars relating to him so far, it is hoped, will not be thought improper; as he was so extraordinary a man in himself, and one to whom Ireland owes such infinite obligations: but a more general account of his conduct will now be given. The reader is therefore to suppose, that this great apostle and his coadjutors were continually employed in some places or other in their great design; and their success was answerable to their zeal. The historians of Ireland, as well as the numerous writers of his life, all agree that PATRICK had retained a perfect skill in the Irish language from the time of his captivity; and to that in some measure attribute his extraordinary success. That he might have some faint remembrance of a language which he had once learnt in his youth, and might recover it again with more ease than an entire stranger could acquire it, may be allowed to be very probable: but if we consider the low station in which he served in his captivity,

that

that he was twenty two years of age when he left Ireland, that he had no communication at all with that country afterward 'till his return upon this mission, and that between this there was a space of eight and thirty years, his skill in the Irish language at his first landing on his mission, may in my opinion be justly doubted, if not denied. It will appear too perhaps more probable to the reader, that his associates were many of them native Irish, at that time at Rome upon their studies; who could therefore interpret as well as preach for him, 'till he had recovered his acquaintance with the country language. But to whatever reasons they owed their success, an amazing success they had.

In the second year of their mission, and when the assembly at Tara was convened, the Bishop and two of his disciples came into that neighbourhood; rightly judging, that if they could make an impression here, upon the Monarch, the provincial Princes, the nobles and their retinue, it would make their work more easy over all the rest of the kingdom. Before this convention therefore they appeared and preached; and by the blessing of God upon their endeavours, and the influence and example of the Queen and some others of the court, a great number became Christians and were baptized. LOGARY the Monarch held out for some time with great zeal and firmness: but his curiosity being excited, by so many principal persons who had been converted, to be more particularly instructed in the new religion, he declared himself at length a Christian; and his example was followed by multitudes of his subjects. The legendary writers who dress up tales, and the historians who deal in miracles, have multiplied them exceedingly upon this occasion. But whether the miracles themselves may not admit of some dispute, or whether the historians who lived not till long after, might not have been imposed upon, as in the case of miracles we know they almost always were, I shall not determine; neither shall I trouble the reader with any account of them: They are too strange and numerous, and the tales are too absurd, to find a place in this work which aims at truth and at instruction.

The Irish were by this time in so much haste to embrace the Gospel, that, if the Bishop himself is not mistaken, several thousands were baptized by him and his followers in one day. But how great a progress soever the missionaries had made whilst they were in Ireland, for they all concurred in the undertaking, and PATRICK alone had not all the labour, though all the merit is given to him; yet it was nothing in comparison of what still remained to be done. They therefore applied themselves with the utmost assiduity, to preaching, converting and planting Churches wherever they came; and with unparalleled success. So rapid a progress was not perhaps known in any other land. The people, says an historian, embraced the doctrines of Christianity with a spiritual sort of violence: and if it is true, as no doubt it is, that those doctrines met with the least opposition from the learned nations, this great success of the faith of CHRIST in Ireland will appear the less to be wondered at. The Bishop and his disciples addressed themselves every where to the Princes and great men in the first place, for this reason; as well as for another that has been mentioned, that the populace would easily be induced to follow their leaders. It must be observed however, that several years were thus employed in converting the people and founding Churches, before any episcopal sees or ecclesiastical discipline was established.

Whilst Ireland was thus advancing in knowledge and learning and true religion, her arms were extending her military renown abroad. This renown however consisted in their successful ravages of countries, on whom they had no other claim than what they founded in superior power: and when they had enriched themselves with plunder, they returned home with captives to grace their triumph and to make use of as slaves in their most servile occupations. Thus LOGARY considering the practice of his predecessors, and being probably moved with the same desire of spoil and glory, transported his army into Britain; where being joined by their allies and tributaries the Picts, they began their hostilities with greater confidence than ever: and that they might make irruptions upon the enemy at their pleasure, they attacked the wall of SEVERUS, which, being weakly defended by the Britons, was broke down in many places. A tribute and a treaty were the consequence of this victory; and the Britons being in a low and weak condition,

pretences

pretences were not wanting in a short time after to renew the war. The same sort of ravages without any right on one side, and the same sort of misery without incurring it justly on the other, continued more or less for several years, till the calling in of the Saxons, which put an end to those invasions of the Picts and Irish. It must be observed that these invasions of kingdom against kingdom, merely for the sake of plunder and of dominion without any just cause of war, were the vices of the age, and not of the people of whom I am writing: and all the great actions of the ancient nations, which have filled the world with so much glory, were nothing else but valourous and successful piracies. Even the renowned Greeks and Romans, who in their great politeness have been pleased to style all other nations barbarous, were as much renowned for these unjust and barbarous depredations as for their arts and learning—but I turn again to the history.

The people of Ireland were at this time so much engaged in their conversions, and in erecting and endowing Churches, with the other circumstances that an introduction of Christianity had made necessary, that little else being attended to, we find but little else recorded. About ten years after the arrival of PATRICK, he founded a Church and a Bishop's See at Clogher, which he for some time governed himself, and then surrendered to MAC CURTIN, his old companion in Italy before he came with him on this mission; and he is reckoned the first Bishop of that See. In about two years after he removed to Ardmagh, the land of that territory having been given him by DAIRE the proprietor of it: and here he laid out a city of large extent, and in a beautiful situation; in which he built a Cathedral, Monasteries, and Churches, drew inhabitants to it of all sorts; established schools and seminaries of education; and determined upon making it the metropolitan See of Ireland. At this time it was probably that he surrendered Clogher to his coadjutor above mentioned. But as the labours of his mission met with such success, that he had not hands sufficient to carry on the work, he passed over into Britain in order to procure more assistance. Here he found several, eminent for their piety and learning, whom he consecrated Bishops, to the number of thirty, and brought back with him into Ireland.

A. D. 443.

A. D. 448. Strengthened with this assistance, and the religion of Ireland having acquired the face of a Christian Church, in the year after his return PATRICK visited his See of Ardmagh; where in conjunction with his associates he held a Synod; the canons of which have been published by WARE among the works ascribed to this prelate from the British councils by SPELMAN. Having broke up this Synod, he went into that part of Leinster which was still unconverted, and which is now called Dublin, from the black and boggy bottom of the river. The people, though untaught, were not unacquainted with the fame of PATRICK; and they flocked out in great multitudes to bid him welcome. His usual success attended him with the Prince and people of this territory; whom he baptized in a fountain in the southern part of it, called afterwards St. PATRICK's well, and which in USHER's time was open. Near this fountain he built a Church; on the foundation of which, the best Cathedral in the kingdom hath been since erected, which still bears his name.

When he had preached and propagated the faith and settled Bishops throughout the province, the next care of this Apostle was to visit Munster; which he had hitherto neglected, not without good reason. I will explain what I mean. The names of ALBE, of DECLAN, of IBAR, and of KIRIAN, have been already mentioned in the beginning of this book; as Irish Bishops promulging the Christian doctrine before the coming of PATRICK or PALLADIUS. But they had confined their labours entirely to the province of Munster, their native country, in which they lived; where, as their preaching and instructions were mostly private, their success was not extended very far. It was however so considerable and every day encreasing, that PATRICK thought he might leave that province to them, and make it the last care of his mission. Therefore the other parts of the island being generally then brought into the pale of the Christian Church, he turned his labours to that province, that he might compleat the work of his predecessors. His predecessors, afraid perhaps of the higher powers, or not having so much judgment as this Apostle in the conduct of their undertaking, had neglected to apply themselves, as he always did, to the Kings and Nobles of the province first. The sequel will justify what I say.

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As soon as PATRICK was arrived in the neighbourhood of Cashell, preaching the Christian Doctrine with great boldness, ANGUS the King of Munster, hearing of his fame, went out to meet him with great alacrity, and respectfully conducted him to his palace. The conversion of the King and all the chief men of the province, was the immediate consequence of his preaching; and the consequence of their conversion was a visit from the four Bishops to the King and PATRICK; where they all assisted at a synod in drawing up constitutions for the government of the Church. Of the particulars of this synod we have no other remains than that Emly was erected into the archiepiscopal See of Munster; for ALBE, and the other three Bishops had dioceses appropriated to them in that province. But it was not without difficulty, and some hazard of the Church's peace in this infant state of it, that the four Bishops who were here, and ordained at Rome before PATRICK, or before the popedom of CELESTINE, could be brought to submit to his authority as their Primate. However, for the sake of union, and out of regard to the great labour and the great success of PATRICK, at last, and with reluctance, they were prevailed upon to acquiesce; but rather as the Patron, it must be observed, than as the Primate of the Island.

Indeed it does not appear from any monuments of antiquity, manuscript or printed, that the See of Rome pretended to exercise any spiritual or temporal jurisdiction at this time in Ireland; or that PATRICK had any powers or ensigns of a Primate conferred upon him by the Pope or by any other person. Neither was it till seven hundred years after this, that EUGENIUS transmitted by his legate PAPIRON, four palls to Ireland, whither a pall had never before been brought. S. BERNARD, an incontestable evidence in this case, confirms this assertion in the annals of Mailross; who says, that from the very beginning to his own time, the metropolitanical See of Ardmagh wanted the use of the pall. Very justly therefore might CAMBRENSIS say, “ that tho’ PATRICK chose Ardmagh for his seat, and appointed it to be as it were a metropolitanical see, and the proper place of the primacy of all Ireland, yet there were no Archbishops there; but Bishops only consecrated one another till JOHN PAPIRO, the Pope’s legate, brought four palls thither.

In no part of the Irish history, or in PATRICK's life, written by several, except JOCELINE, a fabulous Monk, are there any traces of a power given to this Ecclesiastic, either as a Primate, or Archbishop. On the other hand, indeed, the Chronicles take notice, that GELASIUS, then in the see of Ardmagh, seven hundred years after him, "was the first Archbishop, because he used the first pall; and that others before him were called Archbishops and Primates in name only, for the reverence of S. PATRICK as the apostle of the nation." In short they erected Bishopricks, and Archbishopricks too, according as they thought fit; as we may conclude from PATRICK's erecting his own See of Ardmagh into a metropolitan; and he, with ANGUS, and the other Bishops, making Emly the archbishopricks for the province of Munster.

In like manner, we are told, that the King of Leinster with the consent as well of the laity as of the clergy, appointed that in the city of Fernes should be the archbishopricks of all the province of Leinster; and even in the time of BERNARD, so late as in the twelfth century, he has said, that "CELSUS the Archbishop of Ardmagh, had of the new constituted another metropolitan See; but subject to the first and to the Archbishop thereof." May we not therefore fairly conclude from hence, that all these things being done at home among themselves without consulting with the Popes, the Irish considered them as Bishops only of a particular diocese, or at most but as Patriarchs, on whom their own Church had no dependance in the least? I think we may. Nay they were so far from acknowledging the Pope's authority, that they did not so much as know that his holiness pretended to have any authority over them: nor did those prelates in fact aspire to the exorbitant power claimed afterwards by their successors in S. PETER's chair.

A. D. 455. Bishop PATRICK having remained seven years in Munster, in preaching, baptizing, planting Churches and other requisites of his mission, took his final leave of this province in the year four hundred and fifty-five, and returned again into Leinster. During his abode in this country, not thinking it inconsistent with his duty as a missionary, he gave his advice and assistance in the reformation of the government, as far as the

genius of the nation would permit; and he went no further. His business as a politician consisted in correcting the abuse of liberty: and the Princes considering him as a very able man as well as a good one, the friend and patron as well as the apostle of the Irish nation, they admitted him to sit in the assemblies of the state, and paid great deference to his judgment. At his request, it is said, that LOGARY summoned a convention of the chiefs, historians, and antiquaries of the kingdom; in order to purge their records and histories of their corrupt connexions with their old religion. Before this convention they were all produced; and a committee of nine being appointed to reform them, three Kings, three prelates, and three antiquarians, their amendments were drawn up; and being approved of by the whole assembly, were disposed into the public archives, as an authentic collection for future ages to have recourse to, and to which was given the name of "the Great Antiquity." Many copies were taken of this venerable code of records and history; and by general consent committed to the care of their Bishops, to be deposited in the churches for the benefit of posterity. To the multitude of these copies it was owing, that they were not all destroyed in the ravages of the Danes and English; and that some fragments are still in the hands of the curious at this day. Of these are the book of Ardmagh, the Psalter of Cashel, the book of Glendaloch, the Lebhhar Gabala, and several others which KEATING mentions, and from which he drew great assistance in compiling the history of that kingdom.

Besides the convention abovementioned for the amendment of their records and histories, LOGARY summoned the great assembly at Tara, according to the custom of his ancestors; where these amendments were transcribed also into the royal Psalter, and where the laws that were connected with their Pagan superstition underwent the same purgation with their records; and new statutes were added in conformity to the religion which they had then embraced. This body of laws was also deposited in the royal palace, to be consulted upon all occasions as an unerring standard of justice, between man and man, and for the right administration of the state against all offenders. But it must be observed, that the sudden change to the Christian religion made no great change in the constitution of the Irish government, though

though in the execution of this system it wrought a great one; because it taught men how to govern, and how to obey, from purer principles of conduct, as well as from much stronger and sublimer motives, the rewards of virtue in a future state.

As the Pagan ecclesiasticks were admitted to a share in the Legislature, it is no wonder that this custom should be continued under the Christian government; but their power, says an historian [b], never amounted to any thing near that clerical tyranny and unexampled prostitution so much complained of in these later times. If ever they attempted to get a share of power in Ireland incompatible with liberty, they certainly failed in the acquisition. They kept themselves, or they were kept, within their proper ecclesiastical departments; nor would this knowing and free people admit them to be the trampers on the civil power. But where Gospel authority alone is exercised, little is to be feared from the Clergy: they do the state the greatest service, and they merit the highest reverence from it. This was the case in Ireland; and that the spiritual had no collision with the civil power, we are assured not only by our native historians but by the consent of foreign writers; who celebrate particularly the antient Irish for the retention of their religion, upon the true principles and firm foundation of primitive Christianity.”

During the six years that PATRICK remained in the province of Leinster, after his return to it from his progress over the other parts of the island, he made frequent excursions to the northern bounds of Ulster; converting the few who still remained in their heathen state, and confirming those in the Christian faith who had before embraced it; and then it was, that churches and monasteries being every where erected, he is said to have laid out the whole kingdom into divisions, decimating the people, the lands, and the cattle, and taking the tenth part of the whole for the use of the church. The men were ordained into some religious order, and the women were settled in convents and nunneries separated for their use, with a sufficient revenue from the tenth share of the land for their support. In short, it is

[b] Dissertations, p. 144.

related, that by the care and good management of this great apostle, there was not any part of the kingdom, that did not abound with religious persons ; and a provision was made for their education and subsistence.

It is even said by some writers, that he founded three hundred and sixty five churches, ordained as many Bishops and three thousand priests. On this passage Bishop LLOYD [c] observes very justly, “ that the writers of those times, when they were set upon the pin of multiplying, made the numbers of things as many as the days of the year : but the true meaning perhaps might be, that besides the Bishops he brought with him from Rome, and afterwards from Britain, he ordained as many suffragans as there were rural deaneries, in each of which taking one with another there were eight or nine parish priests : and if he would so far consult the ease of the Bishops and the convenience of the people, he might do it without altering the species of church government, which was the same then in Ireland as it was at that time in the churches of the Roman Empire”. Be this however as it might, we are told that when the primate returned to Leinster, he relinquished the see of Ardmagh, and appointed BINEN or BENIGNUS for his successor.

It is very surprising that no reason whatever should be assigned by any historian for such an extraordinary step, and that no other particulars should be handed down relating to it. It does not appear that he resigned the primacy — if in truth he was ever possessed of any regular primacy, which I much suspect — though he relinquished the see, which he had designed and called the metropolitan. In this case therefore we are left to our own conjecture from the genius of the times and the principal features in the character of the man : and from hence it seems to me, that as he had not a passion for money or for power to gratify, and being fully bent to lay out the remainder of his life in the great ends of his mission, he would not be confined to any particular designation, but his province should be at large, and the state of the

[c] Church Government, p. 92.

church in Ardmagh, being yet in its infancy, should not be destitute of a pastor ; or he might perhaps intend at that time to take the journey to Rome, which in six years afterwards he went ; and he would not leave the island without a metropolitan, nor his diocese without a Bishop, lest his return might be uncertain, or never happen. Whatever were his motives, he consecrated BENIGNUS Archbishop of Ardmagh, and continually employing himself in Leinster and the North parts of Ulster in the duties of his mission, at the end of six years he left the island and went to Rome.

Whether it was before, or after, this journey it is not said, but the old chronicles relate, that he consecrated the Archbishop of Cashell to have authority over that division of the island which was called Leath Mogha — mentioned in the reign of CONN — but in obedience and subjection to the Primate and Metropolitan : and the reason which they assign for this partition, is, that the monarchy of the kingdom was then in possession of the Heremonian line ; many branches of which of great rank and power had been converted to Christianity and received baptism at the hands of PATRICK : And therefore they insisted that the metropolitanical church should be in their division in Leath Conn ; the superior rights and dignities of which should be equally extensive with their temporal power. For the same reason, it is said, that ANGUS the King of Munster, and the other descendents of the Heberian line, procured the second see in authority and jurisdiction to be in their division, of which they had the command under the successive Monarchs of the kingdom, and so an Archbishoprick was ordained at Cashell. But this I apprehend to be confounded with the appointment of ALBE before mentioned as Archbishop of Emly for the province of Munster ; which is but three miles from Cashell, and was afterwards sunk into, or united to that see : and accordingly we find some of the ancient records speak of the Archbishop of Cashell, under the style and title of the Archbishop of Munster.—But to return to the history.

The Boromean tribute, exacted by the Monarch TUATHAL from the province of Leinster, though it was rather the effect of rage and
revenge

revenge than an act of justice, yet had received a solemn sanction from the legislature, and continued to the time of which I am writing. One would have expected that the doctrines of the gospel, which they had now embraced, should have purified their hearts and given them better notions. But few Princes act from principle ; especially when principle and their interest are inconsistent. To this it may be added in excuse of LOGARY, that this customary tribute had continued so many ages, that it was converted into a sort of right by prescription. Whether the Monarch thought of it in this manner or not, or whether he thought at all about the nature of the act, it is certain that he made a demand of the usual tribute : and it seems as certain that CRIMTHAN, at that time King of Leinster, from the light which he had acquired by the Christian doctrine, was convinced of the iniquity of such an exaction ; and that it was a flagrant instance of tyrannical power, rather more iniquitous under a Christian than a Pagan government. For this reason, when the Irish Monarch made a demand of the wonted tribute, the King of Leinster would not permit it to be levied in his province ; and both sides prepared for battle. The provincial forces of Leinster were fighting their own cause, in defence of their property which was attacked with great injustice : but the army of the Monarch were not concerned in his success. They lost none of their rights and liberties, if they were vanquished ; and they acquired nothing but the empty glory of defeating their own countrymen, if they proved victorious. Under these circumstances the two armies met and engaged ; when the Monarch's forces were routed with a terrible slaughter, and he himself was taken prisoner.

The King of Leinster, having got him thus within his power, was determined to free his province from this tyrannical imposition at least during the rest of LOGARY's reign : and therefore the only condition of the Monarch's liberty insisted on by CRIMTHAN, was a solemn oath never to ask for the Boromean tribute as long as he lived. The King, rather than remain in captivity all his life, submitted to this condition ; and bound himself by the strictest oaths and imprecations

to release the province of Leinster from this unjust demand. But in defiance of this obligation, he was no sooner set at liberty and in a capacity to revenge his imprisonment upon CRIMTHAN, than he carried fire and sword into his province ; pretending that his engagements were extorted from him by violence. But the vengeance of heaven, says the historian, ever attending upon the guilt of perjury, would not be eluded by such evasions ; and as a proper example to Kings that they should not trifle with oaths and treaties, he was struck dead with lightning. This was the way of reasoning among the Monkish writers, who dealt in fiction and surprize ; and who never wanted a miracle to avenge them of their enemies, or to carry on any righteous purpose.

But there is great reason to be convinced, that all the pretended miracles which are said to be employed by PATRICK and his associates in the conversion of these people, were not only in general and for the greatest part, but universally and entirely the effects of fraud and of imposture. For it must be observed that this conversion happened at a time when learning was but low ; and when a general credulity and want of knowledge, gave opportunity to the ecclesiasticks of coining their fables and obtruding them upon the world for facts : such fallacies being common in those days among good men, when the end of them was to promote the Christian interest. A man who is conversant in the history of these primitive ages must be wilfully blind not to see this, and abominably partial not to own it. “ But nothing is more subject to delusion than piety, which takes for sacred all her imaginations of what sort soever : and the best intention in the world is not enough to keep it in that respect free from irregularity”.

If it was thought necessary to bring an immediate judgment from heaven for the punishment of the Monarch's perjury, it was likewise suggested by the zeal of the Monkish writers, that they should cover the honour of Christianity from the stain of so foul a crime : and therefore having assured us that LOGARY was converted to the faith of CHRIST by PATRICK, it is asserted by some of them that he apostatized,

tized, and that his oath was, as a Pagan, by the sun and planets and stars of heaven. They did not consider, or perhaps they did not understand, that Christianity is not accountable for the wicked lives of its professors; and though the judgment is enlightened by it, yet the will of man is left in all its natural power. But with what severity soever they have treated the memory of this Monarch, they have invented such a tale of his son's recovery from the dead after three days and nights, by the intercession of St. PATRICK at the Queen's request, who was a pious convert, as fully justifies every thing which I have said of their fraud and ignorance. After all it is very doubtful whether the King was killed by lightning: for, according to WARE, it is said in some histories, that he was slain in battle by the people of Leinster, in attempting to take the tribute which he had released by oath.

The death of LAOGARY after a tolerable reign of five and thirty years, opened a way for the succession of OLLIOLL MOLT, the son of DATHY of the Heremonian line, to the Monarchy of his ancestors. In the same year Bishop PATRICK returned from Rome, taking Britain in his way; where he left the rules for the monastic orders which he instituted, called "curfus Scotorum"; and from whence he brought with him into Ireland a new supply of Bishops and Priests, in order to support the Church which his own hands had founded. Though he was by this time advanced to an extreme old age, and could not perform the active part of a missionary, yet his zeal for the undertaking was not in the least abated. He frequently held synods and ecclesiastical councils, in which every thing was expunged that had crept into the Churches contrary to the Catholic faith; and every thing agreeable to natural law and the Scripture canon was established.

OLLIOILL.
A. D. 463.

In all these proceedings, and indeed in his whole conduct as the Apostle of the Irish nation, he acted like a man who had no other commission than what he owed to his zeal and the vigour and integrity of his own mind; or than what lay in common to every Bishop of the Catholic church. The pretence of an universal pastorship over the churches by a DIVINE RIGHT, was not so much as thought of at that time at Rome: and churches unformed were plainly left to the prudence and charity of those pious men, who should

be the happy instruments of converting pagan nations to the faith. It is plain by what followed, that the Irish seemed acquainted with no other authority, than what arose from the charity and the good sense of PATRICK: and if they were acquainted with any other, if they knew any thing of the universal pastorship or patriarchal power at Rome which extended to this island, they acted, it must be owned, like strangers to all pretensions of that nature; as will appear when we get further into the history—I shall now return to the state.

The opposition which had been given to LOGARY's demand of the Boromean tribute, and the ill success he met with in that measure, did not deter his successor OLLIOLL MOLT from making the like attempt. For the same error prevails in public as in private life; the error of not being convinced in things against our inclination but by our own experience. His insisting therefore upon a tribute, which had been paid through so great a length of time to the Monarchs of Ireland from the province of Leinster, is not so much to be wondered at, as his not seeing the great iniquity and oppression of this act, after so many years instruction in the moral duties of Christianity. But this only proves, among a thousand other instances, that few men act entirely upon principle; and that in the general we are governed, by passion, custom, or caprice, not only in the little, but in the great affairs of life. OLLIOLL MOLT however is handed down to us by the historians, “as an honour to religion and government; because he can be charged with no other mal-administration than what the best of his predecessors had been equally guilty of.” But the best of his predecessors were pagan Princes, for whom more is to be said in excuse than for this Monarch. Indeed nothing is to be said for him, but that the convention of the states had sanctified this oppression by law; and that custom had taken away much of its scandal, if not of its iniquity, in the opinion of the legislature.

But if OLLIOLL was not deterred from making this demand by the ill success of his predecessor, on the other hand the King and people of Leinster were encouraged, by the prosperity of their arms against LOGARY, to exert themselves in defence of their rights and liberties, in opposition to the tyranny
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of the succeeding Monarch. With the same spirit therefore that the demand was made, with the same resolution it was refused ; and after the usual manner of deciding the contests of Princes in those warlike ages, a battle was fought with mutual fierceness, and a terrible slaughter on both sides ; and yet the province was not freed from the cruel exaction of this tribute. More is not said in the ancient annals, and therefore more cannot be related. For the monkish writers of these ages were so fond of ecclesiastical affairs, that we meet with little else besides the founding of Churches and Monasteries, the succession of Bishops, the exterior progress of Christianity, and the miracles of their Saints.

Great encomiums are bestowed upon this Monarch, for his frequent recourse to the sense of the nation, by regularly convening the representatives to meet at Tara. Whether any thing more than the usual business was transacted in them, we are not told ; nor indeed do we hear of any other acts of OLLIOLL's, besides the summoning these assemblies, and the battle fought with the province of Leinster for their tribute, during a reign of twenty years. In support of the great character which he left behind, the chronicles think it enough to record nothing ill of him ; for they look upon the Boro-mean tribute as much the act of the State as of the Monarch. But surely only to do no ill, wicked as the world has been, is a commendation below the dignity of a man ; scarce good enough for a tame and domestic brute. Man is made a sociable creature ; and Kings, of all men, are evidently intended to be of use and service to the society over which they are placed. Leaving therefore the merit of OLLIOLL to rest on the credit of the annalists, I shall proceed to inform the reader, that notwithstanding this merit, as he did not fill the throne by right of succession, LUGHAD, the son of LOGARY, who had been put by, raised a formidable party against him. Neither his merit nor his authority were able to preserve him from the attacks of his competitor ; and the forces of both having joined issue, the battle of Ocha was fought, in which OLLIOLL MOLT was defeated and slain. But this battle was not only decisive with respect to the reigning Monarch, but also with respect to the regal succession of the provincial Kings.

For notwithstanding the law established in the reign of TUATHAL TEACHMOR, in order to preserve the monarchy in his own family exclusive of the Princes of the other lines, yet some of those Princes were now and then thrust in by faction, which is regardless of all laws, divine as well as human; and though they approved themselves worthy enough of the crown they held, at least some of them did, yet their abilities and integrity were a bad equivalent for such illegal usurpations. But the time was now come, that the Heremonian line was so powerful in the family of NIALL the great, as not only to exclude the provincial Princes for near six hundred years, and to confine the sovereignty to themselves, but also to produce a prodigious revolution in power and property. For though a nominal pentarchical government still subsisted, and the petty sovereigns were called Kings of Leinster, Munster, &c. as before, yet all the provinces were so curtailed by this sly Niall race, which had erected principalities out of them, that the government of Ireland from this time became in fact aristocratical, like that of Germany at present. With this event I shall therefore put a period to this book; the historical facts of which, both civil and ecclesiastical, when stripped of their miracles and legends, are much fewer than we might expect in this enlightened age. But it is almost certain that we have but a small part remaining of what was written; just the outlines or annals of their history copied into the registry of their Churches, and which escaped the barbarous ravages of the Scandinavian rovers as well as their English enemies.

The facts however which have been transmitted, are not without their instruction both in public and private life, in the Church as well as the state: and if the ecclesiastical and the civil reader are not the better for them, the fault is not in the history but in themselves. The pious zeal and benevolence of the good Bishop PATRICK and his associates, may be a lesson to an Irish ecclesiastick in particular, that his best endeavours should be exerted to perfect the work which they began; not in converting the people from pagan darkness to Christianity as they had done, but in reclaiming them from a darkness almost as gross and pernicious to society, the errors of popery and their ignorance of true religion. The field for his labours is almost as
large,

large, and zeal and diligence are as necessary, as they were in the days of the first missionaries: and though in this age an ecclesiastick is not expected to be a Saint, yet so many Churches in ruins, so many parishes without a Protestant minister residing in them, and the wretched condition of that religion in Ireland, deserve surely to be laid to heart more seriously among the clergy, than we have reason to think they are. However to point out examples in former times for the improvement of the present, is certainly the best design in writing history; and to apply these examples is the best end in reading it.



T H E

T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

I R E L A N D.

B O O K VII.

LUGAD II.
A. D. 483.

NOTWITHSTANDING the rapid progress which the Christian faith had made, in the first fifty years after its introduction into Ireland, yet its morals were too sublime for the carnal mind; and not many great, not many noble, not many mighty were converted. Even of those who had embraced it, not a few remained under the power of their evil habits, if not under their former ignorance, and such hasty conversions accomplished with little instruction, upon no grounds of reason, upon no principle but a sort of fashion, custom or enthusiasm, without examination, and perhaps without understanding the grounds of their belief, do no great honour to the religion under whose banner such converts list. The reader therefore must not be surprised, if he meets with infidelity among some of the Chiefs and Princes; or with the same intestine divisions and bloody contests

contests for power in their Christian state, as he hath already seen whilst they were Pagans. Nor is this a greater objection to religion, than to natural law.

LUGAD II.

There is an unaccountable mixture of contrarieties in the nature of man as it now stands ; the seeds of something so great and noble in his reasoning faculty, and at the same time something so weak and disorderly in his general use of it, as have puzzled the wisest and most inquisitive men to account for. No wonder therefore, that in this state of corruption, the Christian religion hath not a greater effect upon the heart than we see it hath ; when it is taken up through form or education without the conviction of the mind ; or when wrong opinions in it are adopted favourable to this corruption ; or when passion and dissipation prevent a serious attention to its most important principles. Any one of these circumstances is sufficient to prevent the influence of religion on the human heart : but these were all perhaps united in the first conversions of many of the Irish Princes to the Christian faith ; and they lived accordingly.

The death of OLLIOLL MOLT, which was sought for no other reason but because his life stood in the way of his successor's ambition, led LUGHAD the son of LOGARY to the throne : and as though this unhappy country had been always doomed to be devastated by the strife and slaughter of its own inhabitants, we read of nothing through a reign of five and twenty years, but of six bloody battles fought by Irish against Irish, we don't know why nor wherefore, and fatal to many thousands. Some of these were no doubt occasioned by the exaction and refusal of the Boromean tribute ; and a more important cause perhaps could not be assigned for any. In one of these fell ANGUS the King of Munster, before-mentioned ; who is said to pay such a regard to the piety and instructions of S. PATRICK, as to settle a great revenue on the clergy of his province, and to retain two Bishops, ten Priests, and seventy-two religious in his court, for the performance of divine service.

MIL.
KEATING.
O FLAHER.
USHER.
HARRIS.
WARE.
COMERF.
Eccl. Hist.

We left the good Apostle, as the reader may remember, in extreme old age, convening synods and councils for the government of the Church,

LUGAD II. and for the encrease of true religion. The course of the history obliges me now to return to him. It does not appear that after his last voyage from Britain, he either resumed the see of Ardmagh, or confined himself to any particular charge. For though he lived thirty years after that excursion, yet being so much stricken in years, and the faculties of his mind probably failing with his constitution, he spent the greatest part of this time in the monasteries of Saul and Ardmagh. Nor was he easily drawn out of these retreats, unless called by some very important business of the church, in which his authority and advice were necessary. But worn out at length with age and infirmities, in the tenth year of this reign, and in the hundred and twentieth of his age, he died in the abbey of Saul, and was buried at Down.

In this manner ended the life and labours of Bishop PATRICK, deservedly called “ the Apostle of the Irish :” and though he is generally understood, and reported by most writers, to have established the metropolitan see at Ardmagh, and to have been himself an Archbishop and Primate of all Ireland, yet I find no good authority for this conjecture. There is no transaction in any of the histories of that country to lead to such an opinion ; and the writers of his life, who are said to be three-score in number, deserve not to be credited. They have all of them ascribed to him the power of working miracles ; and perhaps imagining that they could never do him honour enough, they have made him Primate and Metropolitan of the Church he founded among the Irish. But we are told by Archbishop USHER in a manuscript which I saw under his own hand in the College Library at Dublin, “ that though PROBUS acknowledges the primacy to be in the see of Ardmagh, yet he does not say that PATRICK founded the Church there, but only monasteries and habitations for religious men : and the most ancient author in whom we read the feat of the primacy to be placed by PATRICK himself at Ardmagh, is no older than BERNARD—in the twelfth century,—who saith, that he lived and died there : whereas all depart from him in the latter part of his report, and there is no necessity that we should absolutely yield to the former, that in his life-time he was Bishop thereof. As the Irish antiquities mention Bishops of that nation before
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the mission of PATRICK, so also do I find in them mention of Metro-
 politants before the coming of PAPIRON.” LUGAD II.

But it is certain that the primacy of old did belong to the see of Ardmagh; and whether PATRICK had any other authority or power as metropolitan than what he conferred upon himself, which is much to be doubted, yet it is as certain that he appointed and consecrated Bishops. In short, to speak my own opinion, he rather acted as an Apostle of the Church of Ireland, going about from place to place, instructing the people, planting monasteries, ordaining assistants in his undertaking, establishing a liturgy, and framing rules of discipline, than as a Bishop of any one particular church. His resignation of Ardmagh soon after it was founded, if it was not strengthened as it is by other circumstances, is a plain proof of this. But whatever were his authority and jurisdiction, in his life we see nothing but zeal and piety, mortification, assiduity, and a thorough contempt of the world. From the great success which he had in propagating the gospel, a great deal of his history is employed by the Monkish writers, with the miracles that he performed in almost every place. But whether these were owing to the care of God, or to the credulity of the age, I shall leave the reader to judge. However, there was not a man in the world perhaps of a better heart than PATRICK. He was engaged in a glorious undertaking, was blessed with wonderful success, and we may say, that he was stamped in the very mould of zeal. But what is more than this, he lived up to his doctrine; and made his example in the highest manner significant of the goodness of his religion. It is no wonder when the Christian faith was taught by such a Prelate, so sweet in his temper, so benevolent in his disposition, and so upright in his practice, that he should be so successful as we find him in converting the Irish nation. Upon the whole, it may be said of PATRICK, that he had great zeal and learning, great devotion and virtue, and a strength and firmness of mind equal to any that we read of among the primitive Christians.

It hath already been taken notice of, that though this Bishop was probably consecrated at Rome, and is said by all writers to have been sent

LUGAD II. into Ireland by Pope CELESTINE, yet there are no traces of any commission, no instructions from his Holiness, nor the pretence of any model of Church government to be met with. It is evident, however, that the Religion which he introduced into that island, and which was professed by all the ancient Bishops, Priests, and Monks, and their Disciples, as to the chief points of doctrine, was in substance the same with the religion established at this day. Hence it follows that the reformation of the Church of Ireland, was so far from being liable to the objection of introducing novelties, that it removed only those errors and changes which had crept into it both in doctrine and worship through ignorance and superstition.

The use of the Holy Scriptures, was so far from being forbidden to the Laity, that it was recommended and enjoined as every Christian's duty. The place of purgatory, and prayers for the dead, were never heard of there 'till the twelfth century. They held image worship to be impious and abominable; and, by a canon of S. PATRICK, no creature was to be sworn by but the Creator only. Their infants were baptized without the consecrated Chrism; which is laid to their charge by LANFRANK Archbishop of Canterbury, so late as the eleventh century. The celibacy of the Clergy was a doctrine so unknown in the Church of Ireland, that INNOCENT the Third in the twelfth century, sent express directions to his Legate to abolish the abuse prevailing there, "of sons and grandsons succeeding their fathers and grandfathers in their ecclesiastical benefices." Many instances have been brought by Archbishop USHER, to prove that the Sacrament was anciently administered in both kinds to the people, and the cup not withheld from the laity; nor was the Mass any thing more than the public service of the Church, even when prayers were only said without the celebration of the Communion. As to the liturgy, there was no uniformity at all observed about it, but several forms of public service were used in different parts of the kingdom; till the Roman use was brought in at the request of all the Clergy in the beginning of the twelfth century.

The ancient Christians in Ireland, as it appears from some of their writings, knew of no other foundation of their Church than CHRIST; and they give to PATRICK and other Prelates, the titles “of his Vicar, of the Higheſt Prieſt, and the Higheſt Biſhop;” titles which his Holineſs in later ages hath arrogated to himſelf as enſigns of his monarchy. It was not indeed till the twelfth century, that the Pope of Rome pretended to any juřiſdiction temporal or ſpiritual in this country. The Kings and people of Ireland preſerved the nomination of Archbiſhops and Biſhops in their own hands; the clergy and laity of a dioceſe recommending a Prelate on a vacancy to their King, and the King to the Monarch, who had a negative in the nomination. Nor doth it appear from any approved record of antiquity, that either viſitations of the clergy were held in the name of the Pope, or that any indulgences were ſought by the Iriſh at his hands. They might probably have a great regard to the piety and learning of the Biſhops of Rome in thoſe days; but there are no footſteps to be found of any ſubmiſſion to that ſee, or any opinion of its infallibility: nay, there are inſtances of their preferring the judgment of other churches before it. Even Cardinal BARONIUS himſelf acknowledges, “that all the Biſhops of Ireland ſtood up in defence of the three chapters condemned in the fifth general Council; and when they perceived that the Church of Rome received the condemnation of them, they departed from her, and adhered to the reſt of the Schiſmaticks that were in Italy, Africk, or other Countries; animated with this vain confidence, that they ſtood for the Catholic faith, while they defended thoſe things that were concluded in the council of Chalcedon.”

It was neceſſary to give the reader this abſtract of the religion of the ancient Iriſh; which, under that title, he may find treated of in a book by Archbiſhop UſHER, if he deſires to ſee it more at large; and in which the authorities that he goes upon are particularly cited. This ſketch however is enough to convince us, that the reformation made no other change in the church of Ireland, than to bring it back again to its ancient ſtate, before the court of Rome had uſurped an authority over it, and corrupted it with innovations as contrary to Scripture as to com-

LUGAD II.

mon sense. In short it will remove one of the main pillars on which they rest their arguments against Protestants; that we had no other church before LUTHER but the church of Rome. For from hence it hath appeared, that, during the first seven hundred years after the introduction of Christianity, the Irish were so far from owning the authority of the Church of Rome, that they had their own liturgy distinct from the Roman service, their own Ecclesiastical rites and customs, their own metropolitical power without a pall, even greater than it was after it; and in short, that they had no communication directly nor indirectly with the see of Rome, any otherwise than they might have with any christian Bishops.

A. D. 503.

In this condition stood the affairs of the Irish Church at the death of PATRICK: and of the State we find nothing more recorded in this reign, than what hath been already mentioned; except that at the latter end of it a descent was made on some parts of Scotland, and Albany, Argyle, and the Hebrides conquered. The reader may remember a colony planted in North Britain, called the Dalriadas, as well as one of that name in Ireland, from ACHY RIADA their founder. That colony grew up gradually in numbers and power, as this did also in Ireland, under his posterity, who governed both the Dalriadas with equal success. The Picts at last, however, grew jealous of this rising family in North Britain, as the people of Ulster and the Momonians had been before; and making war upon their new guests, drove them back again into Ireland with some animosity. These sort of injuries are seldom wrote by the sufferers in sand; and a body of people being affronted, the nation which they belong to share in the disgrace. The Kings of Ireland therefore, who never wanted fierceness nor resentment, being determined to revenge this violent expulsion of the British Dalriadas, assisted the sons of EIRK with a formidable army; not only to regain their old possessions, but also to extend their conquests and dominion in North Britain. With this army, the descent and success above-mentioned were made and obtained in the last years of the reign of LUGAD. These sons of EIRK were known by the names of the two ANGUS's, the two FERGUS's, and the two LORNS; and they were of great reputation and interest in their country,

not

not only on account of their illustrious lineage, but also for their own LUGAD I personal qualifications.

Whether LUGAD had not been educated in the Christian faith, or whether he had not embraced it, or had revolted from it, it is impossible for us to determine. One of these however probably was the case; because his death is said to be from a thunderbolt, as a punishment from Heaven for opposing St. PATRICK's preaching. If this is to be credited, that he met with his death in a storm of lightning, it must be observed that he lived fifteen years after the Saint, and that this good man was disabled from any such exercise of his ministry for thirty years before his death: and therefore if this anecdote of the King's death were true, the punishment of Heaven for his infidelity was long delayed; too long delayed indeed to deserve that title. If the Monarch had not embraced, or had revolted from Christianity, and fell abroad by a stroke of lightning usually esteemed a thunderbolt, it is no wonder that the superstitious writers of that age should interpret it as an immediate judgment from above. In those times of ignorance; and well it would be if it might be said in those times alone, the ecclesiastical writers were as familiar with the decrees and judgments of Heaven, as though they had been themselves of the council; and their notions of the Deity were more suitable to a little narrow minded man, than to the great and benevolent father of the universe. But in what way soever LUGAD came by his death, an interregnum succeeded it for five years. It is strange that we should find no other account of an incident so remarkable and extraordinary; not the least word dropped by any historian from which we may conjecture how this should come to pass. Whether by any particular accident no Roydamna had been chosen in a reign of five and twenty years, which is highly improbable; or whether he died at the same time with the Monarch, and the various contests for the throne were not determined in less than five years, it is not said; nor is it possible for us to guess.

A. D. 508.

At the end of that period, the family of the sons of EIRK had acquired so much renown in the progress of their arms against the Picts that MURKERT-MURKERT.
TAGH of the line of NIALL the great, the grandson of LORN the eldest of those sons, was elected Monarch of Ireland. Notwithstanding his illustrious
descent

A. D. 513.

MURKERT. descent and his own personal merit, nothing more remains of him in a reign of one and twenty years, though more no doubt must have been recorded, than that he met with great opposition and disturbances in his government, fought five battles, in one year, and at last died a natural death. This is the account we have in KEATING; but my manuscript relates, that his enemies having set a house on fire in which he was entertained, when he was almost burnt to death they took him out, and cruelly throwing him in that condition into the water, he was drowned. But contrary to both these accounts we read in WARE, that some say he died with drink, and others that he was drowned in a hoghead of wine. His grandfather LORN had better success in attempting the Scottish sovereignty; for by the conquests which he and his brothers made a little before, he acquired the title and authority of King of Albany, or Dalriada. Here they began to erect a monarchical government, upon the plan of that of Ireland their parent country. But this not being completed in the time of LORN, and his brother FERGUS succeeding him, from whom are lineally descended the present Royal Family, he is generally distinguished by historians as the first King of Scotland. The rest of the annals of this reign that we have remaining, treat of nothing but the birth and death of Irish Saints; the stories of which, if they were not legendary—as they are—deserve not to be related in such a work as this. The reader may lament with me, but he cannot blame me, that there are no other nor better materials for history at this period. To the poverty of the writers, to the bad taste of the times, or to the rage of conquest, perhaps a little to all of them, but to none so much as the last, this great deficiency must be attributed.

TUATH. II.
A. D. 533.

TUATHAL Maolgarb, the great grandson of the hero NIALL, succeeded to the Monarchy on the death of his predecessor. His reign was eleven years, and yet nothing worthy of notice is handed down concerning it. Indeed KEATING hath told us very gravely, that his surname was given him, because as soon as he was born his mother struck his head against a stone, as a sort of charm upon which his future fortune was to depend; and the blow having occasioned a flatness upon his head, he acquired the name of Maolgarb. Whether the ignorance of the mother who did this, or of the man who gravely related it for history, is the most surprising, I shall leave to the readers determination

mination. But the credulity of this writer had scarce any bounds : he tells us also of a disciple of St. PATRICK who died in this reign at the age of three hundred years ; and of a sturdy cripple at the fair of Taltean, who had his head struck off from his shoulders in the fight of a great number of people, by the vengeance of Heaven, as a punishment for swearing falsely by the hand of one of their Saints. One would be apt to suspect the truth of this miracle, if for no other reason, yet for this ; that it hath had no effect on the common people of that country, who from that day to this continue the practise of swearing falsely beyond all other people that we know. A dry narration of the birth and death of some more Saints, and of a few battles fought, without the least particular concerning them, fill up the remainder of the history of the days of TUATHAL.

TUATH. II.

The days of this Monarch it seems were finished at the request and instigation of his Roydamna, though he was himself a great grandson by another father of NIALL the great. DIARMUID, or DERMOD, the new Monarch, was, like many of his predecessors, impatient to mount the throne : and to the fears and jealousies of the Monarchs on one side, and to the ambition and thirst of honour in the Roydamnas, on the other, so many cruel murders, and such slaughter of the Kings of Ireland in battle, must undoubtedly be attributed. Notwithstanding a dreadful Plague overspread the kingdom in this reign, which made terrible havock, yet the rage of ambition remained still uncured ; and battle succeeded battle with hellish fierceness and a deluge of blood. One of these was fought against the reigning Monarch, in which he was defeated with a terrible slaughter of his troops, and obliged to fly to save his life. There is nothing marvellous or uncommon in this at all : but according to the superstition of that time, a Saint must necessarily have the power of Heaven at his command ; and this great defeat is attributed to the prayers of a Monk against him, whom the Monarch had offended by putting to death one of his scholars. The name of this Saint was COLUMBE CILL, and next to PATRICK he made the most illustrious figure.

DERMOD.
A. D. 544.

It might redound perhaps to the honour of monkery to give him so much interest in Heaven as to direct the battle in what way he pleased : but the ignorance of the writer was equal to his superstition ; not perceiving,

DERMOD. that at the same time he did a great dishonour to Christianity, in representing a Saint to execrate his enemies, and to execrate them with success. But many instances of this sort occur in this age, in which an honour is done to monkery at the expence of truth and of religion. Soon after DERMOD met with this defeat, the Monk, which perhaps might give rise to this report, removed into North-Britain, founded a Monastery at Huy, since called Iona, and made a great figure afterwards in that country. The same ill fortune attended the Monarch in another battle, when the piety of the Monk was not employed in his defeat; and here the slaughter was almost incredible, there being scarce a man of his army that remained alive.

It is proper however to inform the reader, that the manuscript in my possession gives a different account from this above; but agreeable enough to another which KEATING himself gives of this fact in another place; and which though it may not be truer is somewhat more satisfactory. It tells us, that COLUMBE having borrowed a book of FINAN, another Monk of great name, and which was written by him, COLUMBE copied it; which as soon as FINAN heard, he demanded both the copy and the original. COLUMBE not being willing to yield up what had cost him a great deal of labour, the dispute was referred to DERMOD; who decided it in favour of FINAN with this coarse and uncourtly simile, that every copy belonged to the original as every calf belonged to its dam. COLUMBE was offended with the Monarch for this sentence; and soon after his resentment broke out into a flame, on the Monarch's forcibly taking away a Prince of Conaught, who had fled to COLUMBE for protection, for killing a companion by chance medley, and on his causing the Prince to be put to death. If the Monk was wrong in the first instance, he was undoubtedly right in the second; and exciting the King of Conaught and some Chiefs of his own family to chastize the Monarch for his cruelty, the battle was fought with the success mentioned above, as an effect of COLUMBE's prayers. The reader has now the two accounts, and he may take which he pleases. Not long after the second battle, DERMOD himself fell by the sword, after a reign of one and twenty years; not very glorious nor very happy.

On the death of this Monarch, FERGUS and DONALD, the two sons of MORTOUGH of the Niallian family, swayed the sceptre jointly for one year. In this short time they fought with the King and province of Munster, whom they defeated with the loss of many of their Nobility, and the greatest part of their army. Whether the two Monarchs were mortally wounded in this engagement—which is not improbable—or whether they fell by a natural death is uncertain: we are only told that they both died soon after. Neither is there any other account of the three next successions, but that the son and brother of one of them reigned jointly for two years, and were slain; that the same fate attended the next Monarch of the same family in three years; and that his successor held the crown but one year before he was treacherously slain also. How it happened that there were twice two Monarchs on the throne together, and how the reign of so many of them, all of the Niallian lineage, was violently determined in so short a space, we meet with nothing to inform us. These things therefore must remain now for ever in obscurity, and we must content ourselves with the accounts we have.

FERGUS II.
and
DONALD.
A. D. 565.

On the death of the last Monarch, AIDH or HUGH, of the posterity of the hero NIALL, obtained the crown. In a reign of twenty seven years which he enjoyed it, we may naturally look for something, besides the founding of monasteries and colleges—which the public dissensions gave no interruption to—and the birth and death of Bishops and Saints; and in this expectation we shall not be disappointed. For though this reign was sprinkled as usual with bloody battles, yet the life of the Monarch being spared, notwithstanding some defeats, there was time enough for these contests, and in the intervals for cultivating the interests of government and the arts of peace. Accordingly we are told, that religion and learning flourished in the monasteries and schools; and the poets being encreased to a prodigious number, and becoming a grievance to the people from the charge they were at to support them, HUGH was determined to put them under another regulation, or else to expell them all out of the kingdom. Indeed if the account is to be credited, that because of the ease and idleness enjoyed in this profession—for there a profession it was—and of the great immunities and advantages annexed to it by the ancient laws of the

HUGH I.
A. D. 572.

HUGH I.

land, a third part of the men of Ireland passed at this time under the name of poets, and claimed the privileges of that character, the resolution of the Monarch seems wise and necessary.

An idle tale is mixed with this important anecdote by the historians, and disgraces it not a little ; that the King's resentment against this body was principally whetted by their insolence, in demanding the gold buckle and pin which fastened the Royal robe upon his breast, and was delivered down with the crown from one Monarch to another with a religious punctuality, as an essential ornament. The absurdity of this demand by such a number of men is too glaring to admit of any degree of credit ; and must have been introduced into the history by one of that order, to make the Monarch's opposition to them appear personal and ridiculous. But this we know was not the first time that the Poets felt the resentment of the Kings and people of Ireland. They were thrice before become so obnoxious from their numbers, and so burdensome from their support, that, had not the Kings of Ulster each time interposed, received them into their province, and in a manner been sureties for their good behaviour, the Poets would long since have been banished out of the island.

Besides the regulation of this order of men, the Monarch had other affairs of importance at this time upon his hands which required redress.

The tribe of the Dalriads in Scotland, besides an obligation to assist their mother country with their forces by sea and land, were also to pay an Erick, which signified Ransom or Kindred-money, by way of homage to the Crown of Ireland. But this tribute, since they had erected Scotland into a monarchy, was paid for some time with great reluctance, and now was absolutely refused. This was an indignity in the eyes of a King of the Niall race that was not to be borne ; and HUGH determined to put an end to it. Another business, of no small importance to a careful Monarch, it was also necessary now to adjust. SCANLAN, the Chief of the country of Ossory, had not only neglected to transmit into the Exchequer the revenue arising from that territory, but had also appropriated

appropriated the money to his own use, for which he was put in prison; and his son being a man of abilities, and willing to give security for the payment of the taxes laid upon his country, the King was inclined to give him the government of it in his father's room. Whether the Monarch had not the power to make this change himself, without a consultation with the States of the kingdom, or whether having the other affairs to propose for their deliberation, he voluntarily waved his own authority, and threw this into their hands also, in order to become popular, it is impossible for us to say: the sequel would incline one to believe the latter.

In the frequent contests for the crown, and the tumults occasioned by such a quick succession as we have just passed through before HUGH's advancement, it is impossible but many disorders must have crept into the government and weakened the constitution. As soon therefore as he was settled firmly upon the throne, he issued a mandate to the Princes, the nobility, the clergy, and the principal gentry in the kingdom, to meet in parliament at Dromceat. How Tara came to be refused upon this occasion we are not told; and yet particulars of less moment are related, such as the names of the great men, and their titles, who met in this assembly by the King's command. A person, however, of the greatest figure there, next the King himself, was certainly not summoned; and that was COLUM CILL or COLUMBE, from North Britain. The chief occasions of calling this parliament having been transmitted to the Monk, he was determined to attend it; and to throw in all his weight and influence in favour of those whom the King intended to proceed against. It is possible that he might have a tincture of poetry in his composition, which might incline him to interpose in behalf of the professors of that art; and he might have had a private friendship for SCANLAN, or might be related to him, and from thence might be interested on his side. But whether this were so or not, it is easy enough to account for his intervention, extraordinary as it was, between the Monarch of Ireland and the Dalriadas of North Britain.

The temper of COLUM CILL, as much a Saint as they have made him in the Irish history, was turbulent and revengeful, as will appear more
plainly

HUGH I.

plainly than it hath done already: He was now become an inhabitant of Albania, had erected a monastery at Iona, of which he was himself the Abbot, and had extraordinary influence in the councils and the public affairs of that kingdom. The reader will easily give me credit for this assertion, when he is told that COLUM CILL brought with him in his retinue to this parliament, no less than twenty Bishops, forty Priests, fifty more in religious orders of one sort or other, and thirty students in divinity not yet admitted.

It must be owned indeed, it seems incredible, that Bishops should appear in the train of a Monk, who was himself only a Priest: but our venerable BEDE has cleared up that matter by letting us know, “that the island of Iona had always an Abbot for its governor, who was a Priest; to whom not only the whole province, but also the BISHOPS, by an unusual order, owed submission; after the example of the founder and first teacher, who was not a Bishop but a Priest and a Monk.” “It might be added, says COMERFORD, that the Monks who had vowed obedience to the Abbot of Iona, though advanced to the episcopal dignity, believed their former vow to be indispensably obliging.” This passage will undoubtedly solve the difficulty of accounting for COLUM CILL’s being at the head of such a body of men at this convention: but may it not also throw some light on the authority, which S. PATRICK assumed in Ireland as Metropolitan, without any commission or appointment from the Monarch, or the Pope, for such an authority? I think it may.—But to turn again to the story.

It is said in some old manuscripts, that the Abbot was sent into Scotland by way of penance, for having embroiled the kingdom in great contention and three bloody battles in order to gratify his revenge: And as the terms of the penance were, that he should never see Ireland more, that therefore he wore a bandage over his eyes before he landed on this expedition, and during the whole time of his stay in the island. But this has too much the air of a Legend to be credited. Be it however as it might; when COLUM CILL and his attendants drew near to Dromceat, intelligence was brought to the King of Ireland of their arrival. The

Abbot's character being well known and remembered at the court, an impression soon took place to his disadvantage; and no wonder.

HUGH I.

The appearance of an Abbot of a fierce and fiery disposition, with such a train from Scotland, which it was one of the chief intentions of calling the Parliament to humble, had no promising aspect. He was not summoned; and strictly speaking, he had no right to a seat in this assembly, having removed from Ireland many years. The Queen therefore, it is said, was greatly alarmed at the arrival of such a troop of Ecclesiasticks from North Britain; and having no great veneration for their spiritual character or religion she persuaded one of her sons, as little affected to them as herself, to treat the Abbot and his retinue with contempt; or in other language, to give them a public affront. The Prince, in consequence of this advice, secured a mob; and when COLUM CILL and his company had entered the assembly, and were received with singular respect,—but my manuscript says, as they were drawing near it, which is most probable—they were pelted by the mob with turf and dirt in an outrageous manner.

An indignity like this, the reader must imagine, was not to pass without revenge from the Abbot; and when the story was in the hands of a Monkish writer, it will be no surprize to hear that the Saint had Heaven at his command, though at the expence of his Saintship, to do the Devil's work; at least to curse the Prince by the bell, which immediately procured his madness, and to bring long and languishing pains upon the Queen, and even on the maid who carried her message to the Prince her son. Among such writers in those ages, this kind of miracles is so frequent, that one meets with them in almost every page; and it is not peculiar to this history. Superstition and ignorance were in every place the characteristicks of the times: they thought it necessary to give their Saints all the power of Heaven, though that power was exercised very often, by their own account, to most unrighteous purposes.

The

HUGH I.

The Monarch had another son, whose name was DONALD, of a different disposition from his brother, who paid great respect to the Abbot and his companions; and therefore he was as much entitled to COLUM's blessing as the other son had been to his curses; and the success of both in the court of Heaven, we are told, was equal. These mutual civilities having passed between them, the Abbot was introduced into the King's apartment; who is represented to stand in some awe of the Saint, on account of the miracles which he dealt about so liberally on the persons of those who chanced to offend him. But the sequel of the story does not confirm this fact. COLUM opened the negotiation with which he had charged himself at this assembly in a private audience; and having informed the Monarch that he had three requests to make him, his first intercession was for the Poets. In answer to this the King assured him, that his intention of banishing those people did not arise from his dislike of their profession, but from the grievance, which by their numbers, their maintenance, and their hindrance of trade and industry, they occasioned to his people.

The privileges annexed of old to this order of men, whose patrimonies as well as persons were inviolable in all commotions, no taxes nor services being required of them, and their houses being as so many sanctuaries not to be violated without impiety, had encouraged such an incredible number to enter themselves into this society, that the profession itself was become obnoxious to the State; and the Monarch saw no remedy but by totally suppressing it. The Abbot being convinced, by the King's representation, of the necessity of a regulation, and yet being averse to the utter extinction of the order proposed to the Monarch to restrain the number, and degrade the rest. The King approved the proposal, and it was carried into a law; which subsisted as long as the Irish retained their government. The King of Ireland, every provincial Sovereign, and the Lord of every territory, were each to retain a Poet, in order to record the exploits and preserve the genealogies of their families: a salary was to be settled upon them, sufficient to afford an honourable maintenance; and they were to instruct the youth of their several districts in history, poetry and antiquities. An Arch-poet or President was set over the whole body, who was to examine the abilities and qualifications of the several candidates on a vacancy, and to nominate those whom he thought best.

best deserved it. The revenues assigned for their support, were exempted as before, from tax and plunder, their persons were also privileged, and besides their stated salaries they were to be paid for every poem by their patron according to its merit.

HUGH. I.

This important affair relating to the poetical order being thus adjusted to their mutual satisfaction, the Abbot proceeded to his next request; which was, that the King of Offory might be released from his imprisonment and restored to his government of that territory. But as much as HUGH is said to stand in awe of the Saint, he gave a flat denial to this request; and doubtless thought it not a little impertinent in the Monk to make it. The historians however have contented themselves with releasing SCANLAN by the Saints interest in Heaven, without inflicting a punishment on the King for his disobedience. An Angel appeared in the prison, bid SCANLAN stand up, leave his fetters behind, and follow him. The Saint advised him to return home, and resume his government; and to secure him against any further attempts of HUGH, which he was afraid of, COLUM lent him his episcopal staff—who by the way was no Bishop—which would be alone a defence against all temporal power. The history goes further, and relates mutual civilities between the Saint and SCANLAN, which I presume the reader will not expect that I should repeat: it will rather want an excuse, I doubt, that I have dipped in this legendary tale so deep already. But even these tales sometimes are not without their use. They not only discover the genius and the principles of the times, but they shew us also to what amazing lengths of credulity and delusion, enthusiasm is able to carry those whom it hath possessed, even against the testimony of their own sense and reason.

Another part of the Abbots negotiation, and perhaps the only one that was not impertinent, is still behind, the tribute to be paid to the crown of Ireland by the Dalriadas of North Britain; of whom COLUM CILL was the spiritual father. His interposition therefore in this case was not unnatural, and will admit of some excuse. But though he pleaded the cause of his friends and disciples with great warmth, yet he had not that success which might be expected from a King who is said to have stood in awe of him. The Abbot

HUGH I. represented the long difuse of the tribute, the indulgence which had been shewn that colony by former Monarchs, the unnatural hostility of waging war upon their own descendents, and the readiness of the Scots to assist their mother country still with all their forces against an enemy. But this remonstrance had no effect. HUGH was determined to push the demand of this tribute in the assembly with all his influence; and he was not to be moved from his purpose by any thing the Monk could offer. The reader however may be assured, that his bigotted historians would not permit the Monk to be baffled; and therefore they tell us, that finding all his arguments and entreaties vain, he left the Monarch with this threat, that the Scottish colony was under the immediate care of Heaven, and that they were able and determined to put an end to the tyranny and oppression of the crown of Ireland; and Providence did accordingly deliver them from it.

Thus ended the negotiation of COLUM CILL with the Monarch HUGH: but the assembly at Dromceat continued sitting, it is said, without any prorogation for the space of thirteen months; in which the law relating to the Poets, and many others of great utility to the state, were devised and settled. Before we take a final leave of this extraordinary Monk, in order to shew the reader the state of religious knowledge at that time in Ireland, it may be proper to let him know, that every family of the nobility and gentry throughout the kingdom which had renounced Paganism, had a singular veneration for some particular Saint, whose protection they implored, and whose name they invoked upon all occasions; as the Heathens did their household Gods. In short, there was not a country or territory in the whole island which had not their particular Saint, whom they chose as the guardian of their lives and fortunes; and these Saints are all recorded with the provinces and families they had the charge of. But these were all allowed to be of an inferior order when compared with PATRICK, who possessed the first place in the Irish calendar, which he still retains, as the guardian Angel of the whole island. COLUM CILL was esteemed the tutelary Saint of the illustrious tribe of O'NEILL; and to his interest above, the success of their battles, in which they were invincible, was attributed.

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The Boromean tribute from the province of Leinster, continued still to be demanded, and still refused; and it was not therefore without the loss of many lives, valuable to their country, and much more valuable to their families, that this tax was paid by one side or levied by the other. Such, and so calamitous, are the fatal effects of ambition and pride in the breasts of Princes! If the monarchs of Ireland were too proud to relinquish a claim established by their predecessors, and confirmed by the legislature, though evidently a wicked one, the Kings of Leinster, grieved by such an iniquitous exaction which they had no share in provoking, were too high spirited to submit to it without compulsion; and thus the poor innocent people were sacrificed to the pride of both. The tribute being denied as usual in this reign, HUGH sent one of his sons with an army to collect it: but this army being defeated and the son slain, the resentment of the Monarch was much enflamed. Collecting therefore a great body of forces from the other provinces, he marched in person at the head of them into Leinster; but his camp being surprized by the enemy, a great slaughter was made in the royal army, and the Monarch himself did not escape.

HUGH I.

HUGH the second, surnamed SLAINE, another descendent of the hero NIALL, and COLMAN King of Meath, of the same family, shared the monarchy between them; or, to speak with more propriety, ruled the kingdom jointly for six years. It is natural to expect some account of an event so extraordinary and important; but nothing is to be met with; and we are only told that they fell by the sword. HUGH the third, the son of DONALD, of the same lineage, ascended the throne; and all that we hear of him or of his reign, which lasted seven years, is, that he was troubled with fits, that he met with frequent disturbances, and was killed in battle. Though the three next reigns make a period of thirty years, yet there is no other historical fact recorded, than the names of the battles fought, the deaths of their Princes, and the miracles and deaths of their most famous Saints. It is said indeed, in my manuscript, that a synod was held during the last of these reigns.—DONALD the son of HUGH the first being Monarch in the South parts of Ireland, about the time

HUGH II.
and
COLMAN.
A. D 599.

HUGH III.

DONALD II.

DONALD II. of the celebration of Easter : but the members of the synod not agreeing in opinion on this subject, that they dispatched the Abbot of Leighlin to Rome, in order to have their difficulties solved by the Apostolic See ; and that when the Abbot returned from thence, another synod was held at his convent, where the same debates arising, notwithstanding the Pope's decision, the assembly broke up without being able to come to any agreement. Hitherto then it is plain, that the Church of Ireland knew nothing of that infallibility in the See of Rome, which hath since been founded so very high ; and that no other submission was paid to its authority, than as it agreed with the opinions of the Irish Ecclesiasticks. It appears too that these opinions in the general were not very conformable to the Roman model ; and every Church indeed at that time sat undisturbed in the enjoyment of its own observances : the supremacy of the See of Rome was not then, it is very certain, pretended to on the one side, nor submitted to and acknowledged on the other.

How much soever the want of historical facts is to be lamented in this age, yet, if it was possible to recover all the history that was wrote of it in Ireland, the whole would amount to little more than a mere narrative of the succession and genealogies of their Kings and Saints ; the battles of the former, and the miracles of the latter ; the churches, monasteries, and schools that were erected ; the revenues appropriated ; and the prodigious numbers which flocked from all parts of Christendom that were educated in them. In short, so bad a taste for writing prevailed at that time universally, through the general ignorance and superstition which mankind were held in, that the historians, who were always Monks, or men in orders, scattered other topicks over their writings with a very sparing hand.

We are told indeed, by a modern writer, “ that whilst the contests of the Hy-Niall Princes were every day disturbing the nation by their wars, or warlike preparations, yet each of them endeavoured to support his pretensions by popular virtues, and by giving the utmost security to religion and letters, in the endowment of colleges, the encouragement of knowledge, and in the establishment of the profoundest peace to the sciences

sciences amidst all the tumults of war. Thus, says he, have our Monarchs established a reputation which no other Princes in Europe ever yet obtained: Europe recognized it; and so sensible of their merit was CHARLES the Great, Emperor of the West, that he honoured them in a particular manner with his alliance and friendship; a memorial of which is preserved to this day in the paintings of the royal palace at Versailles [b].” It is to be presumed, that the facts in this passage are undeniable, though the colouring must be allowed to be greatly heightened: and if they shew us that learning was at a very low ebb in Europe at that time, they shew us also that Ireland had the most honourable share of it of any nation; which sent its tutors and teachers to every other part. We in England particularly owe the greatest part of our conversion, notwithstanding the mission of AUSTIN, to the labours and piety of the Monks which swarmed hither from the Irish seminaries: and if we had any gratitude or candour, this alone is a consideration which should restrain us from the contempt, that we in general entertain for the natives of that island. But to return,

On the death of DONALD in a natural way, which was then a little extraordinary, CONALL and KELLACH, two brothers, and the grandsons of HUGH the first, administered the government jointly for twelve years. If we pass by the deaths of some of their Princes and Saints, and the names of some battles fought, there is nothing related in this reign, but a strange tale of one RAGALACH, a King of Conaught, who set aside his nephew from the succession and got him murdered; who ordered his own infant daughter to be given to a swineherd to be destroyed, that he might prevent the effects of a prediction made of her by a Druid, he being still a Pagan; and who met with an ignominious and violent death at the hands of some labourers, as a punishment, says the history, for his taking this daughter for his concubine, not knowing her birth, and for not putting her away at the exhortation of some of the clergy, who had imprecated Heaven to punish him in this manner. KELLACH, one of the Monarchs, was lost in a bog or lough; and CONALL the other

CONALL.
and
KELLACH.
A. D. 642.

[b] Dissertat. Introd. p. 28, 9, 30.

CONALL. brother held the reins of government alone for four years, 'till he was killed by one of his successors.

DERMODII.
and
BLATHMAC DERMOD and BLATHMAC, the sons of HUGH the second, ascended the throne; which they filled amicably for seven years, and were then taken off by a plague that raged all over Ireland. In the reign of these Princes, it is said by KEATING, that a King of England with thirty of his principal Nobility were in a bloody engagement defeated and slain. The English histories say nothing of this event; and this being the time of the heptarchy, the event could not be true of a King of England, though it might be so of a Prince of one of the seven kingdoms. The history of these times consisting of nothing but such short and dry narrations, without entering into the particulars of the most important actions, it is full as tiresome and disagreeable to the writer, as it can be unentertaining and unprofitable to the reader; and I shall therefore lead him through it as fast as I can.

SACHNAS.
A.D. 665.

On the death of the two Monarchs occasioned by the plague, SACHNASACH the son of one of them ascended the throne; in whose reign the Picts, for the first time, invaded Ulster, where a furious battle was fought, and a terrible slaughter was made of both the armies. After a reign of six years, the Monarch being killed as usual, KINFAOLA his brother succeeded him for four years; in which time the Picts made another descent on the province of Ulster, and burnt the famous monastery of Bangor to the ground; the residence of above a thousand Monks, whom they dispersed, and drove out of the country.

FINNACH.

The present Monarch having met the fate of his predecessor, FINNACH GA, by whose hand he fell, though another grandson of HUGH the second, obtained the government. As this Monarch sat on the throne of Ireland for twenty years, the materials for history, one would imagine, should not be wanting. But of the King himself, there is nothing more said, than that he was remarkable for magnificent and expensive entertainments, that he fought a bloody battle with the province of Leinster, in which he made a slaughter of the greatest part of their troops, that then he remitted to them

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the annual tribute of cattle, and that some years afterwards he was killed. FINNACH.
 Of his reign it is said, that it was distinguished by an invasion of Ireland by the Welsh, who committed dreadful hostilities with a numerous army upon the coast; and by another invasion with the forces of EGFRID the King of Northumberland, under the command of a General of great experience; who reduced the inhabitants to the utmost extremities. For these accounts however we are obliged to our own BEDE; who has impartiality enough to say, that they miserably ravaged that innocent nation—meaning Ireland—which was a most friendly ally to the English. The cruelties which the army exercised in not sparing age nor sex, nor even the churches, the monasteries, nor the consecrated vessels, threw the Irish at first into great confusion; but recovering from their fright, they defended themselves so well, and returned the cruelties of the English so effectually upon them, that the General was glad to return home before his army was entirely cut to pieces.

LONGSEACH, a great grandson of HUGH the first, was the next Monarch: LONGSEACH.
A. D. 695.
 and besides another visit from the Welsh who made great plunder, his reign is marked with a terrible and consuming murrain among the Cattle all over the island; which produced a famine so very grievous, that the inhabitants, it is said, were obliged to feed upon one another; and that it continued for three years. But nothing could curb the spirit of those times of ravages and incursions for the sake of plunder. No sooner was the famine well at an end, than the Welshmen, flushed with the success of their former inroads, made another descent on the coast of Ulster. But the people of that province, animated as much with a desire of revenge as the others were with the hopes of booty, and being now prepared for their reception, exerted themselves so effectually and made so dreadful a slaughter of the British troops, that scarce any remained to carry home the tidings to their countrymen of their defeat. At the same time, in a battle between the royal army and the forces of Conaught—on what occasion we don't know—the King of Ireland, who had sat nine years on the throne, lost his life.

His successor was CONGALL of the Niallian race; who during the seven years that he wore the crown, being a Pagan, was a cruel persecutor of the CONGALL.
 Irish

CONGALL. Irish church; burning the regular and secular clergy at Kildare without mercy. One would imagine as Christianity had been planted then in Ireland almost three hundred years, and had met with marvellous success, that a Pagan could scarce have been found among men of rank and education in any part of the island. Much less would one imagine, that a Pagan Prince should have any chance of mounting the throne of Ireland, where the Monarchy was elective without any regard to primogeniture or hereditary right, and where the mass of the people had long been Christians. Here was a fair field therefore for entertaining and important history; and such an event, it is probable, did not escape the writers of that time with a mere register only. This is all however which is handed down to us: and after a reign of seven years, and a death as sudden as unlamented, FEAR-GALL, a great grandson of HUGH the third, was his successor in the Monarchy.

FEARGALL. Notwithstanding the Welsh had so total a defeat in their last invasion, they made another descent in this reign; and a bloody battle was fought between them and the Irish Dalriadas, with equal success and slaughter for a great part of the day; when victory at last declared for the latter, and the Welsh were again routed with the loss of the greatest part of their army. But the most memorable transaction in the reign of this Monarch, was his battle with the King and province of Leinster, about the old bone of contention, the Boromean tribute. The royal army, it is said, consisted of one and twenty thousand chosen men, and the provincial troops which followed the King of Leinster, besides those of his household, were but nine thousand. These indeed were veterans of distinguished bravery, and they were led by a select band of about an hundred champions of the highest military renown. As soon as the two armies met in the field, they began to engage; and the provincial forces, excited by the ardour of their chiefs, made so great an impression in the beginning of the action, that they soon forced their way into the centre of the royal army, and carried all before them; leaving above three thousand dead upon the field of battle.

This surprising defeat of such a superior number, is attributed to a pannick which seized the King's army at the first onset; occasioned, say the historians,
by

by an apparition in the air, that hung over them, and threw them, with the terror of it, into confusion. This fight, adds the Chronicle, so terrified some of the soldiers, that though they escaped with their lives in the action, yet they afterwards ran distracted. But there is no necessity to introduce an apparition as the cause of a sudden pannick in a body of troops who have the superiority; as we have seen in our own time and our own army, at the battle of Falkirk, against the rebels. All pannicks of this sort are unaccountable; and if the old historians had known this, we should have heard nothing of the apparition hovering in the air which occasioned the defeat of the king's army; because no other reason is assigned for this strange appearance, than the imprecations of an hermit, whose cow had been driven away by some of the soldiers, and that others had in their march broke open a church and carried away the communion plate. If the reader is disposed to believe, that these were acts of villany atrocious enough to require a miraculous interposition, and a slaughter of three thousand three hundred men, the story of the apparition will not be deemed incredible. It will serve however to shew the credulity of the age; and with what tales of ignorance and superstition the Monkish writers imposed upon the world; and it has thus far its use in the present history.

FEARGALL.

The Monarch of Ireland being slain in this battle, FOGARTHACH, a descendent of HUGH the second, succeeded to the throne, which he filled only for a year and a few months; being killed in battle by KINETH, another descendent of the same HUGH, who obtained the government in his room. His reign of three years, when he met with the same fate from his successor a son of LONGSEACH, has no other event recorded in it: and though FLAITHERTACH enjoyed the sovereignty after him for seven years, and died a natural death, yet we hear of nothing in that peaceful reign relating to church or state, but that the Monarch, being tired of the cares and pomp of royalty, had a short time before his death resigned the crown and turned Monk. The great zeal of those times was chiefly spent in retirement, shutting themselves up in Monasteries, and devoting themselves to God and to ecclesiastical contemplations. The King being therefore possessed with the enthusiasm so much in fashion, was struck no doubt with the appearance of such transcendent humility, in deserting a throne to become a Monk.

FOGARTH.
A. D. 722.

KINETH.

FLAITHER.

HUGH IV.

HUGH the fourth, of the same Niallian lineage, succeeded him in the sovereignty; which he possessed amidst great disturbances and dissensions for nine years, and was then slain in battle. The Boromean tribute revived the old dispute, and occasioned another fierce engagement in this reign; in which the Monarch and some of his chief commanders were wounded, the Prince of Leinster and the first Nobility of the province were killed, and most of that army were destroyed. The wound which the King of Ireland had received proved not to be mortal: but his life was protracted only to fight another battle with his successor, who was impatient for the sovereignty; and in this battle HUGH the fourth lost his life.

DONALD III.
A. D. 743.

DONALD the third, of the same descent from the hero NIALL, ascended the throne he aspired after: and though he enjoyed it twenty years and died a natural death, taking no part in the several battles that were fought as usual among the provinces by contending Princes, yet there is no reign more barren of historical facts. The deaths of some saints, and of some renowned heroes in these battles, make up all its history; and nothing more important or more particular is related. On the death of DONALD, NIALL a son of the Monarch FEARGALL mentioned in this book, obtained the crown. Many dreadful earthquakes, and a raging famine throughout the island, which destroyed the inhabitants in great numbers, are the principal events recorded in this reign. Indeed, except two battles fought by some of the Princes, and the deaths of a few eminent men, they are the only events we meet with, 'till we are told of a pilgrimage the Monarch made to the Abbey of Iona, when he had reigned seven years; and who, being carried away with the ignorant and unaccountable zeal of the times, quitted the throne and turned Monk in that Abbey, where he died and was buried. How much soever this humor might flatter the weakness of human nature, it was one of those delusions of which piety we see is capable. For a Prince born to a throne, and formed by nature and education to govern happily, is as much obliged to continue in that station, until providence disables or removes him from it, as he is to preserve his life: and though by turning Monk he may shew that he has a sort of humility, yet it is not that which is taught us by reason or religion; and his merit consists more in a fear of doing ill than

NIALL II.

than a desire of doing good.—But to proceed. His predecessor DONALD died at the same place on a visit to the shrine of COLUM CILL the founder of that Abbey in North Britain : and they were probably buried both under one tomb, as BUCHANAN tells us there is one there with this inscription, “ Tumulus Regum Hiberniæ.”

On the abdication of NIALL surnamed the Cloudy, DONOGH or DON-
CHADHA the son of DONALD the third, ascended the throne : and though DONOGH.
his reign was continued twenty seven years, not a battle fought, not a saint's nor a hero's death, no not a single event is recorded in it ; except that the Danes now first invaded and spoiled some of the coast of Ireland and that the Monarch died a natural death. In so long a reign it is impossible but that many things must have occurred both in church and state, that were worthy of a place in the history of those times. The want of these materials is itself a convincing proof, that we have little more than annals or registers of the succession and genealogies of their Kings, extracted from the histories that were deposited in their archives ; and that those valuable originals were destroyed at different times in the rage of plunder by their enemies. At the same time it must be observed, that this is so far from being an objection to the genuineness of what remains, that it rather demonstrates how scrupulous succeeding historians were of adding a syllable of their own, where so much room was left for invention and imposition.

The invasion of the Danes—which began in the last Monarch's reign, and which opened a way to the conquest of some parts of the island, of which they enjoyed a share about three hundred years—being a very remarkable epocha in the Irish history, shall make the subject of another book : And as this is a proper resting place, and will give the least interruption to the story, I will here give an account of the eminent men of Ireland, who flourished from the time of the introduction of Christianity by S. PATRICK, to the arrival of the Danes and Normans ; which makes a period of three hundred and seventy years. The reader, however, is not to expect, that this account will contain all the names which are celebrated for their greatness in the Irish annals. For the judgments of men

are so different, through the power of prejudice, and of the fashion of the times on the human mind, that the same actions which would incur our contempt and censure, in the opinion of those who wrote their story, make them great men and saints. But as learning was at a low ebb, and in very few hands, at this period, the writers who made a figure in it will deserve some remembrance.

Of PATRICK, the great Apostle of Ireland, enough hath been said already; neither need any thing to be added about the celebrated CATHILL or CATHALD mentioned above. The only man therefore of eminence enough to be recorded in this history, who lived in the fifth century, was SEDULIUS, a Poet, an Orator, and a Divine; and who, being educated from his infancy under HILDEBERT an Archbishop, being well versed in the Scriptures, and most accomplished in the learning of the age, for his farther improvement travelled into France and Italy, visited some parts of Asia, and returning through Rome, was greatly distinguished for his extraordinary learning. He wrote many Latin books in prose, a Paschal song in metre, consisting of four books, fourteen books on S. PAUL's Epistles in prose, an Hymn on CHRIST's miracles, and two books on the same in prose, with several others, of which we have not the titles.

The eminent men of the sixth century are not much more numerous than of the last; unless we should absurdly take into the account, all the writers who have published any thing, be it little or much, at that time in Ireland. COLUM CILL or COLUMBE, mentioned in this book, deserves further notice, as one of the chief pillars of the Irish Church. He was born of a noble family, and founded a monastery in a forest, which was called the Field of Oaks. We have seen upon what occasion he went into North Britain, where, by his doctrine and good example, he converted the Pictish nation to the Christian faith. During his residence in that country, he built the famous monastery of Iona, called also "Huy," and "Y-Columkill," of which he was himself the first Abbot; and which was a great while the burial place of the Scottish Kings, and many eminent saints. Almost all the Churches in the north
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of England, as well as the Churches in Ireland, were for many years supplied from these two monasteries with Bishops and Priests. The time of celebrating Easter, which he kept after the custom of his ancestors, and which was contrary to the custom of the Church of Rome, he gave in charge to his successors; and it continued to be observed in the Church of Ireland above two hundred years after his death. He wrote a Rule for the Monks, which is called after his name; the Life of St. PATRICK, and four Hymns on different subjects.

BRIDGET, though a Lady, must not be omitted in a Catalogue of the eminent people of Ireland in this century. She was born in the county of Louth; and, if the writers of her life are to be credited, she was one of the greatest ornaments of the Church and nation: and her memory and name are accordingly had in reverence among the vulgar Irish to this day. She lived for the most part at Kildare, in a nunnery of her own erection, of which she was the Abbess: but so many pious virgins were excited by her example, and desired to live under her direction, that she was obliged to erect several other convents in different parts of the island for her disciples; so that in a short time Ireland was full of religious houses of S. BRIDGET. The reputation of her sanctity, and of her power of working miracles, made Kildare so much frequented, that the many buildings erected about the nunnery during her life formed a town; which in time became so considerable as to be the place of the Cathedral and of the Episcopal See. She wrote a Rule for the Nuns of her order, an Epistle in rhyme to a friend to dissuade him from travel, a poem on the virtues of S. PATRICK, and on the desires of the pious. In order to do the greatest honour to her memory, the religious women of that time invented a perpetual fire, which they consecrated under the name of S. BRIDGET's fire; and which, through the connivance of the Bishops of Kildare, was kept burning till the year twelve hundred and twenty—seven hundred years after her death—when Archbishop LOUNDRES caused it to be put out, to remove all occasion of superstition about it.

CONGALL was the founder of the famous monastery of Bangor, near the Eastern Sea; and such vast multitudes of Monks resorted to it for
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the sake of learning and religion, that he was obliged to erect several others in different parts, and had no less than three thousand of these Ecclesiasticks at one time under his government. He wrote Institutes for these, which are still extant; the Acts of his contemporary S. COLUM; and some Epistles.

At the head of the eminent men of Ireland, in the seventh century, must be placed COLUMBA, a native of Leinster, who applied himself to learning, and made a great progress in it in his youth. His school education being finished, he went into another province, and put himself under the care of the venerable SILENUS, renowned for a happy talent of instructing his scholars; under whom COLUMBA so much improved himself, that he attained an extraordinary degree of skill in explaining the Scriptures. He then entirely forsook the world, according to the humour of that age, and became a Monk under CONGALL, in the Abby of Bangor; where he wasted life for several years. Tired however at last, and being made for more active scenes, he acquainted the Abbot with his desires of propagating the Gospel in foreign countries; and CONGALL knowing his great abilities, and approving his inclination, recommended twelve more of his house to be the partners of his labours and the companions of his travels. With these he passed over first into England, where he continued some time with great reputation and success; as the reader, if he pleases, may see in my English History [a]. Being disgusted however, with the contests that he met with here about the celebration of Easter, and the ecclesiastical tonsure, he went with his companions into Burgundy; and fixing on an old ruinous castle for the place of their residence, they fitted it up, and practised in it all the exercises of their profession. The fame of this house for curing diseases, as well as piety, drew abundance of people from all parts. In the same barren desert he found another old castle, called Luxeuil, which had once been very strong; and his disciples encreasing fast upon him, he converted it into a monastery, which soon became a model for several others. He built another at Fontaine, and subjected this and the first to that of Luxeuil, as being the

[a] Eccles. Hist. Vol. I. p. 85—91.

largest of the three. Hence arose the original of Pories, which being founded by Abbeyes were subordinate to them. He adhered to the custom of the Irish Church in celebrating Easter; which being opposite to the Roman observed in France, acquired him the censure of some of the neighbouring clergy. He wrote several letters to justify his practise, from which he would not recede: and for his obstinacy in this particular, notwithstanding the sanctity of his life, and the good he did, he was ejected out of his Abbey, which he had possessed twenty years, and banished out of the country. After travelling with his companions thro' the greatest part of France, he retired at length into Italy: and built the monastery of Bobi near Naples, upon Mount Apennine, where he died in a short time after. He wrote several Commentaries on the Psalter, a book against the Arians, several books on the Paschal controversy, thirteen Homilies, Epistles, Poems, a Rule for Monks, two Letters to Pope BONIFACE, and a modest Apology for himself; being cited to appear at a provincial synod in France, about the time of the celebration of Easter, which he observed, as it hath been said, after the manner of the Irish Church.

The next in the order of time, though not inferior to the Abbot in worth and greatness, was Bishop AIDAN, who came from the same monastery at Iona, and whom the historians have ranked among the natives of Ireland. To the pious care and learning of this Prelate, the conversion of the Northumbrians in our own country was entirely owing. At the same time that BEDE gives a great character of him, as a man of wonderful humility, great zeal and probity, and goodness of heart, he adds that his zeal was without knowledge, because he kept the feast of Easter not as the Church of Rome did. But as much a Scismatick as he was, nothing can exceed the commendations which he hath given him for holiness of life. He governed the Church of Northumberland for almost seventeen years; erected schools for the instruction of men and children in learning and religion; wrote Commentaries on the Scriptures, Sermons, and Homilies; and was in short an honour to his country, a great benefactor to the English nation, and an ornament to the age in which he lived. But I must refer the reader for a fuller account of this excellent Prelate.

Prelate to the second book of my Ecclesiastical History; where he will meet with the character that AIDAN merited.

FINAN, another native of Ireland, was called from the same monastery of Iona, to succeed AIDAN his countryman in the See of Holy Island, at the mouth of the river Lindis, in the kingdom of Northumberland. Here he had the honour to convert SIGIBERT, the third King of the East Saxons, and the retinue which he had with him at the court of Ofwy; and they were baptized at a town where the King resided. His instructions had the same success with a Prince of Mercia, and his attendants, with whom he sent some of his clergy to convert that kingdom; and they did it with success. The old controversy about Easter was still on foot; and as this good Bishop could not be brought to conform to the Roman custom, a countryman of his, who had been bred in France where that custom prevailed, was sent to him to represent the reasons alledged by the church of Rome in the Paschal controversy; but he was not a match for FINAN; who, besides his superiority in parts and learning, was a man of warmth and spirit, who grew disgusted with the dispute, and more confirmed in his own opinions. He wrote a book on the ancient usage of the Passover, and was a very exemplary Christian as well as an able learned man.

FURSEUS a Monk, according to the humour of those times, having founded three monasteries in his native country of Ireland, came voluntarily into this country to preach the Gospel; in which he met with great success among the inhabitants of the East Angles. BEDE extolls him very highly, and SIGEBERT their King, already a Christian, gave him such a reception, as the zeal of the man and his cause deserved. He built a monastery in Suffolk, now called Burgh Castle, which was largely endowed at several times by the East Anglian Kings; and where-ever he saw the Gospel was wanted he propagated it with equal piety and success. But some commotions arising in this country, he retired into France, and erected the monastery of Lagny in the diocese of Paris near the Sein. He wrote a book of the monastic life, so much then in fashion; and an Irish prophecy is ascribed to him.

DIUMA was another ecclesiastick of Ireland in this century who figured in the English church ; and who, being consecrated by FINAN, was made Bishop of the Mercians and middle Angles, whom he governed prosperously for several years. The seat of his Bishoprick was fixed at Lichfield, and his name hath the first place in the successions of the Bishops of that See. Besides the humour which then prevailed of seeking out retirement in a monastic life, there were so many men of theological learning at that time in Ireland, that the natives were obliged to swarm out into other countries to exercise their talents, and where little learning of this kind was to be found.

Among many others, ARBOGAST an Irishman went into Alsace, a stranger, and an hermit ; and in a sacred grove there, where Hagenau now stands, he built an Oratory, in which it is said that he served GOD continually in prayer and fasting. Convinced however, as well he might be, that this was a lazy sort of piety, and that his talents were given him for other purposes, he quitted his cell, and instructed the inhabitants of the country in the knowledge of God, reprehending their idolatry and confuting their wild opinions. By this means he became known to the reigning Prince who appointed him to the See of Strasburg in Germany ; where, having governed the Diocese with great reputation for twelve years, he died.

ADAMNANUS an Irishman and Abbot of Iona, being sent by the North Britons upon some business to the court of ALFRED King of Northumberland, was there made a convert to the catholic Easter ; and returning home endeavoured to convince his Monks of their former error, but failed in the attempt. Upon this disappointment he returned to Ireland his native country ; where in a little time he brought over most of those who were not in subjection to the monastery of Jona, to the Roman custom of keeping Easter. Encouraged by this success he went back again to his Abbey in North Britain, and made a fresh attempt upon the Monks ; but he could not prevail as long as he lived to introduce the Roman custom into the house. He wrote the lives of COLUM CILL, and of a Queen of the Franks ; several poems ; a description of the Holy Land ; some canons, epistles, a book concerning the true Passover, and a rule for Monks.

CUTHBERT was the son of a petty Irish King; and being left by his mother in the Abbey of Mailros while she went on a pilgrimage to Rome, he made such a proficiency in literature by his parts and application as gave him a taste for the sort of life he found there; for there was little learning in any other. Having passed through the offices of Monk and Prior of his Convent with great honour, he was persuaded by Bishop EATTA, who had a great love for CUTHBERT, to pass his time with him at Holy Island; but affecting a solitary life he shut himself up in the little island of Farn, about three leagues distant in the sea. Here he lived, when he was elected Bishop of Hexham in a synod held by Archbishop THEODORE; and out of an excess of modesty and lowliness of mind, he was the only person that opposed his own election. The Bishops who judged him worthy of the episcopal character, sent many letters and messages to him from the synod; but it was not without the utmost difficulty that they could prevail on him to leave his solitude, and to assume the weighty care and important function of a Bishop. He was a man of great elocution; of a graceful presence; and what is above all, he afforded an example in his own practice for others to imitate. With a truly “*nolo episcopari*” he was dragged to the Bishoprick of Holy Island, which his friend EATTA quitted for him, and was translated himself to Hexham. But no station of life could work a change in the temper of his mind: for in two years after he quitted the mitre, and returned to his former solitude in the isle of Farn, where he ended his days. He wrote a book of the orders of his church; the precepts of a regular life; and monastic institutes delivered by him to his Monks.

I shall close this catalogue of the eminent men of Ireland in the seventh century with an account of COLEMAN; who after going to study at Iona, and being a Monk of that Abbey, succeeded FINAN in the See of Holy Island in the Northern parts of England; a man famous for his contests with the Romish Bishops and Clergy here, about the feast of Easter and the ecclesiastical tonsure. He was the leader in a conference held at Whitby by King OSWY on this subject, on the side of those who observed their Easter only on the first day of the week, after the fourteenth day of the first month; in which they pretended to follow the tradition and example of St. JOHN.

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The leader on the other side was WILFRID, a famous Prelate afterwards in the English church; and he pretended that their rule was that of St. PETER and St. PAUL, which was the first Sunday after the fourteenth day at evening, till the vernal equinox. As poor a controversy as this may seem to the reader at present, and as it always was in fact in itself, yet it is certain that it had been the occasion of a great deal of contention in the preceding ages of the church; and the consequence of it at this time in England was of the first importance to the Roman Missionaries, and to the jurisdiction of the See from whence they came. But this controversy not being agitated in Ireland, the reader is referred to the second book of my church history, if he desires to see the account of it drawn out at length.

This however was not the only matter of debate in the synod at which COLEMAN assisted by command of OSWY. The ecclesiastical Tonsure was another point in which the Irish differed from the Roman usage, and which was also to be discussed at this famous conference. To speak seriously, if there were not a dark side in human nature, and if experience did not teach us, that the zeal of good men does not often bear a true proportion to the subject of it, one would wonder how an usage of such a ridiculous kind as this should creep into the church at all; and much more that it should ever be thought an article important enough to divide it. Who would believe if it were not certain, or who would relate it if historical truth did not oblige him, that there were men weak enough to raise and carry on a dispute with great warmth and violence, whether the tonsure of St. PETER, or the tonsure of St. PAUL, should be observed by the clergy; whether the whole head of an ecclesiastic should be shaved except a narrow circle in imitation of a crown of thorns, or whether only the top of the head in a circular manner; when neither of these apostles had said a word of either? But such men there were; and the peace of the church was disturbed about such trifles. These affairs having been debated with great heat in this synod, and the King having declared himself in favour of the Roman usages, COLEMAN threw up his Bishoprick in disgust, returned to his native country with some English and all the Irish whom he had brought hither, and spent the remainder of his life at Inisbofin. Here he built a monastery for the Monks who came over with him; but these not agreeing together, he erected

another convent for the English at Mayo, who lived after the example of the antient fathers. He wrote a book in defence of his custom of keeping Easter; another of the tonsure of Ecclesiasticks; and an exhortation to the inhabitants of the Hebrides.

The eighth century produced but few eminent men, and of these only two deserve our notice: SEDULIUS the younger, who was present in a council held at Rome by Pope GREGORY the second, and who subscribed a decree against unlawful marriages, was afterwards a Bishop in Spain. He wrote there the history of the ancient Irish, and his manuscript was in the possession of Sir John Higgins, Physician to King PHILIP V. mentioned in the preface. The other great man was VIRGIL, a Philosopher and Mathematician, of an illustrious family in Ireland; who travelling into France for his improvement, staid two years in the court of King PEPIN, by whom being greatly esteemed, he was recommended to the Bishoprick of Saltsburgh, where he laid the foundation and erected the new Church. He wrote a discourse of the Antipodes against the received opinion of the ancients, who imagined the earth to be a plain, and the heavens to be somewhere joined to it: but in that age of ignorance, his philosophy served only to cover him with disgrace.

Having laid before the reader an account of the most eminent men of Ireland, who flourished in the four first centuries after the reception of Christianity, it may not be improper to conclude this book with some reflexions on the state of learning at that time, and on the usages and opinions which the age produced.—As little as there is to be said for the learning of those times, yet it would be a manifest injustice not to observe of Ireland, that it had at least as great a share of it, if not a greater, than any other country in Europe. Indeed it is evident from many testimonies, that it was the prime seat of learning to all Christendom; and that Missionaries from thence were sent in shoals into the continent, to convert the Heathen and confirm the Christian inhabitants. In these places also they set up schools; and in imitation of those academies which abounded in their own country, they laid the foundations of the most flourishing Universities. They taught the Saxons, Danes, and Picts, the use

use of letters, and converted the latter to Christianity by the preaching of COLUM CILL. The English nation in particular, as the reader must be convinced, hath very great obligations to the memory of those good and able men, who, leaving their country and their friends, laid out their time, and the ease and comfort of their lives, to preach the gospel here. It must be owned indeed, on the other hand, that the doctrine of these ages was mixed up with a great alloy, wanting many degrees of its primitive purity and perfection; of which the opinions of celibacy, and monastic institutions, are an amazing instance. But this was the fault of the times, and not of the men.

Monasteries were then the only nurseries of discipline, and the chief schools of learning; and therefore wherever a bishoprick was erected a monastery was usually founded near the seat of it; as well for the habitation and support of the Bishop, as of those who were to attend religious offices in the cathedral, or to preach the Gospel in the neighbouring parishes. These bodies, properly speaking, were colleges of Priests: who, in after ages, were distinguished by the name of Secular Canons, and were under no vow of perpetual celibacy. Nor was this the case of those only who were settled in cathedral monasteries, but those also known by the name of Monks and Nuns were allowed to marry when they saw fit. But yet in the histories of those times, all these societies, as well such of them as were only bodies of Secular Canons, as the others properly so called and were much the greatest number, pass under the general name of Monasteries; which frequently misleads the reader to judge of those foundations by those of later ages. From such societies the Bishops were for the most part chosen; hither they retired as occasion or inclination led them, either for study or devotion; and from hence were drawn in general the lower orders of the clergy. It is therefore no wonder if they were possessed with a great esteem for the places of their education, and that they should magnify the perfections of the collegiate state and way of living. The wonder is, that they should magnify it so much, and that other men should credit them so far, as to be persuaded their salvation could be safe no where else: and from the infinite number of monasteries, abbeys, priories, and religious houses of all denomina-

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tions, which swarmed over this island, one would imagine that they were thus persuaded. Relicks had their share too in the esteem of the people, as well as the use of images in the churches, the worship of which however was then unknown. The study of the holy Scriptures was yet thought a duty in all who were capable of it, and a critical knowledge in these writings esteemed the best qualification for the highest stations in the Church. The doctrines of Transubstantiation, and the worship of Saints, were not so much as thought of at that time; nor was the opinion of Purgatory wrought any further than the outlines: but the superstition of the age, and the credit which was given to miracles and visions, made it easy of introduction afterwards. These reflexions will throw some light on the Irish church at this period, and enable the reader to perceive the errors which it had imbibed: And yet amidst the odd opinions, the unscriptural usages and rites, the ignorance, credulity, and superstition, which were preparing the way for still greater and more pernicious errors, if we would judge candidly, if we would judge truly of the foregoing period, we must allow that the doctrine of CHRIST and his Apostles, without any submission to the authority of the See of Rome, was at that time the standard of the Faith and discipline of the Church of Ireland. Let us be thankful that we live in an age of more light and knowledge.

T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

I R E L A N D.

B O O K VIII.

SUCH a new scene of affairs in the Irish history opens in this book, HUGH. V.
A. D. 797.
by the repeated invasions of the Danes or Ostmen, that before we enter into particulars, it may be necessary to give the reader some account of these foreigners, who became in this age so formidable to all Europe, and particularly to Ireland, where they gained a settlement. It is not material to our purpose, whether what their own historians say of them is true, that they derive their origine from the Goths and Swedes, who, being sometimes united and sometimes divided, sent out all those colonies which after the decline of the Roman empire, over-ran the rest of Europe. It is sufficient to observe, that they were inhabitants of the Northern nations, distinguished by the countries of Denmark, Norway, Livonia, and other places; and that the names of Danes, Norwegians, Ostmen,

HUGH V. Oſtmen, and Eaſterlings, were common to them all, at leaſt in Ireland.

As people increaſe and multiply very faſt in the colder climates, ſo it was no unuſual thing for Denmark and Norway to be ſo over-ſtocked with inhabitants, as that numerous colonies were obliged to ſwarm out to make room for others. The ſituation of their country, and the great plenty of all materials for ſhipping, with which it abounded, not only gave them an opportunity of equipping fleets, and becoming powerful by ſea, but might alſo not improbably give a biaſs to their inclinations towards a naval courſe of life. When ſuch people as theſe were obliged to abandon their country in the ſearch of new habitations, and that not in ſingle ſhips but in whole fleets, it is no wonder that they ſhould plunder every veſſel they met with, and ravage every coaſt at which they came; and therefore nothing was to be ſeen at ſea but the Daniſh pirates. For the great booty made by the firſt adventurers, tempted even the richeſt and moſt powerful of their countrymen to try their fortunes in the ſame manner. They entered into aſſociations in their maritime places for fitting out fleets to ravage foreign countries; much after the way that is now practiſed by the Barbary Corſairs; and to ſay the truth, as much more a poliſhed people as we think ourſelves, not much unlike what is done by us, and the French and Spaniards in time of war, in fitting out privateers to plunder trading ſhips, whoſe property we have no other right to, than what we acquire by ſuperior force. A method of carrying on war ſuitable enough to Savages, but abominable in Chriſtians, or even in an humane and civilized people!—But to return.

The Danes at length were ſo accuſtomed to theſe piracies, and got ſuch immenſe riches by them, that their Kings were ſharers in their ſpoil, and their fleets were become national. Admirals and Generals were not only provided by the crown for theſe expeditions, but upon intelligence of extraordinary booty, the Kings themſelves did not ſcruple to command their fleets in perſon. Theſe were the fleets that made ſuch deſtroyation in England, France, and Ireland, and that occaſioned dreadful complaints of the miſeries brought upon them by the northern nations.

nations. In different countries they had different appellations: they were called Normans, or Men of the North, by the inhabitants of France; in England most usually they were stiled Danes or Goths, and sometimes Norwegians, Juites, and Vandals; but in Ireland, they had for the most part the names of Danes or Ostmen, meaning men of the East.

It is easy to see from this account, that the first intent of the Danes, when they invaded the Irish coast, was only plunder. Their manner of making war therefore was not like regular troops, or a brave enemy, but like public robbers, pillaging every place they came to, and sacking and destroying what they could not carry away. As they were divided into several independent bodies, according to the opportunities which they had of being equipped, it happened often that one band of them was no sooner gone than another came; by which means the inhabitants had scarce any respite from their incursions. For the island being liable to be attacked on every side alike, they were obliged to be on their guard at all times, and in every place. Another great inconvenience arose to the Irish, in having an enemy to deal with whose leaders had no authority one over another, which made it impracticable to enter into any treaty with them; unless they had had as many treaties as there were different parties of the enemy. Nor was this the worst circumstance of the Danish invasions: for the Irish Princes, being always at variance almost with one another, instead of uniting their forces to make head against the common enemy, would often take an advantage of their neighbours whom the Danes had weakened, and complete their desolation by entering their territories with fire and sword.

Whosoever looks backward and sees what proofs the Irish had always given of their courage and warlike achievements among each other; or if he considers the figure they made abroad among the Picts the English and the French, will be convinced that the poor defence which they made against the Danes for two hundred years, notwithstanding their many encounters in which they never lost their courage, humanly speaking, was owing to nothing else but their own intestine divisions, to which this unhappy island seemed always to have been devoted by the hand of Heaven. Having thus prepared the way for the better understanding of the sequel, it is time

HUGH V. to enter upon the particulars of the history, and to resume it where we left off in the preceding book.

MR.
O. FLAHER.
KEATING.
USHER.
WARE.
RAYMOND.
LYNCH.
HOLINGSH.

On the death of DONAGH or DUNCHADDA, the preceding Monarch of Ireland, HUGH the fifth, a son of the last NIALL, ascended the throne. In what manner he spent the first year of his reign, or what was the course of affairs in church and state in Ireland during that period, we have no account: But in the second we are told of a very formidable invasion of the Danes with a fleet of fifty sail, which disembarked a numerous army on the western coast of Munster. As soon as intelligence was brought of their landing to the King of that province, he collected the provincial troops with all possible expedition, and marched towards the enemy in order to give them battle, before they had time to do any mischief. Whether the numbers, or the skill and courage, of the invaders were inferior to those of the Irish, we are not informed; but after a desperate and bloody action the Danes were so thoroughly vanquished, that they fled with great confusion and precipitancy to their ships; leaving above four hundred of their countrymen dead in the field of battle. The approach of night prevented a pursuit and favoured their flight; or the slaughter in the retreat would probably have surpassed that of the action.

About the same time another attempt was made by these roving foreigners on the province of Ulster and the Hebrides, into which they carried the desolation of fire and sword: they destroyed the Abbey of Bangor, killed the Bishop and the religious of the house, and plundered the rich shrine of CONGALL. The King and the people of Ulster being enraged at these cruel and unjust proceedings, gathered all their force together, engaged the enemy with a bravery exasperated to a degree of fury, killed twelve hundred upon the spot, and drove the rest out of the kingdom. The Norwegians being a people of the same piratical disposition, and hearing of the great wealth which their neighbours the Danes had acquired in Ireland, resolved to try their fortune in the same hostile manner, and made an attempt on Leinster. The inhabitants of this province, who had heard of the cruelty and violence which the other invaders exercised, were so struck with terror at their arrival, that they thought of nothing but saving their lives and their
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light effects; and left the country to an enemy who had no mercy. The enemy having plundered all the coast on which they landed, instead of returning home with their booty as the Danes had been wont to do, encouraged by the hopes of adding greatly to it, they marched up into the country, pillaging every house and place they came to. But by this time the Irish were recovered out of their pannick: and the people of Leinster and the Momonians joining their strength together, were more than a match for these plunderers; who apprehended no opposition, and were not a little encumbered with their booty, which was as dear to them as their lives. In this situation they were attacked by the people of the country, with their usual valour; and after a very obstinate engagement, defeated with the loss of seven hundred slain in battle, a thousand in the pursuit, and all their booty.

Nevertheless as Ireland was so much superior in wealth and fertility to the barren inhospitable clime of these invaders, another fleet of sixty sail made a descent on the province of Munster, when FEIDLIM was its King. The usual barbarities practised on such occasions, were not wanting: the religious houses, the monasteries, and churches, underwent the common fate of being plundered and burnt; and the miserable inhabitants were robbed or put to the sword. In return however they met with no better success than many of their predecessors: they were at length repulsed by the Irish with a very considerable slaughter of their troops, and retreated in great confusion and hurry to their fleet. Many other attacks were made in different parts of the island, during the reign of this Monarch by these Northern rovers: but if a detail was to be given of each, the reader would meet with nothing but a repetition of the same barbarities, which are disagreeable to hear, and the same return of slaughter from the Irish, which perhaps may not be credited. The historians assure us, that these calamities were foreseen by a prophetic spirit long before they came upon their country by some of the clergy. But there was no occasion for a spirit of prophecy to foresee, that a people who were embroiled in perpetual contests with one another of the most fatal kind, who had thrown off all appearances of decorum, and were wholly profligate in their manners, had no reason to expect the protection of a righteous providence. A torrent of vice and prophaneness had overspread the land,

HUGH V. says the historian : and was it not reasonable, was it not natural to expect, that, according to the moral government of the world, they must feel the effects of the wrath of Heaven ?

Notwithstanding the incursions of the merciless invaders above mentioned, which had now been very frequent for almost twenty years past, yet the island continued subject to civil discord as much as it had done before ; and the Monarch and petty Princes of the country, instead of opposing the common enemy with their united strength, were perpetually quarrelling among themselves ; and not being restrained from these animosities by the motives either of policy or religion, they laid themselves open to the force and violence of their enemies. The Boromean tribute was still as much contested, and with as fatal effects as ever. HUGH the Monarch insisted on what he thought were the rights of the crown of Ireland ; and the people of Leinster never lost the idea of its being a wicked exaction and refused to pay it. Harassed and devastated as their country had been by several parties of Norwegian robbers, it was not in a condition to withstand the army of the King of Ireland ; who, on the refusal of the tribute, entered their province in an hostile manner ; putting the inhabitants that fell in his way to the sword with the cruelty of a conqueror, and reducing the country to the last extremities. Whilst the remembrance of these calamities was yet fresh in the minds of the people, they were terrified with dreadful tempests by sea and land. A storm of lightning had laid dead above a thousand people in one territory ; and the sea bearing down its banks in another, overflowed a great tract of land which could never afterwards be recovered. To add to the terror of these natural evils, almost all the islands in the neighbourhood of Ireland and which were connected with it in commerce, were totally spoiled by different bands of the Northern Pirates.

A. D. 815, But the greatest attempt that the Danes made on Ireland, and which was the most fatal in its effects, was made at this time by TURGESIUS with a vast fleet of ships and a surprising number of his countrymen. The historians are not agreed in their account of this famous hero ; some asserting that he was the King, and others that he was the son of a King of Norway. The difference however is immaterial : he was a man of great personal courage,
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but, what is very uncommon to that character, of a savage brutal disposition. No sooner was his arrival notified to the Danes, who were then in their little parties ravaging about the island under several leaders, than they proclaimed their joy with the loudest acclamations; and with one consent united under him as their General. Though all their incursions hitherto had been with no other view than for the sake of plunder, yet there is no doubt but at this time they formed a design, which afterwards they executed, of making a settlement in the country.

Whatever were their intentions, it is certain that they renewed their devastations with so much vigour, under the conduct of this leader, that they soon over-ran and spoiled the northern half of the island. He divided his army which was very numerous into different bodies; in order to strike a terror at once in different places, and to oblige the natives to divide their strength and so make it of little use. The same method he took along the coast with his fleet; dividing it into three squadrons, and ordering all his forces both by sea and land to spare neither age nor sex, but to ravage with fire and sword wherever they came; that their cruelties might drive the inhabitants to despair, and that they might fix themselves without the hazard of being dispossessed. Thus the primate and his college of clergy at Ardmagh were plundered and driven away, and TURGESIUS settled himself in the palace; which he possessed with the revenues belonging to that church as long as he lived. But it is unnecessary and would be endless to relate the particulars of the desolation committed by these barbarians: and notwithstanding their ferocity, there is no other way of accounting for their success against the Irish—a people bred to war from their cradle, and of a courage invincible—but by the dissensions and animosities which the Princes and chiefs of Ireland were perpetually fomenting among themselves: owing perhaps as much to their aristocratical form of government, which gave them so great a share of power, as to their own irascible disposition. Thus instead of uniting against the savage Danes, the Monarch of Ireland carried his arms against some of his own people at this very time, when the enemy were in possession of almost half the island; and after a troublesome reign of two and twenty years, HUGH the fifth was slain in battle.

CONNOR.
A. D. 819.

CONNOR the son of DONOGH, was the next that ascended the throne ; and his whole reign was made uneasy by the cruel ravages of the Danes. Wherever they came, they were sure of being welcome to the weakest party ; and none of the factions made any scruple to join with them, though the common enemy, whom they all hated worse than death, in order to get uppermost. Such is the accursed spirit of faction, and such are the evils it entails upon mankind ! The new Monarch, grown no wiser by these evils than his predecessors, instead of using his endeavours to reduce all into harmony, and then with the whole force of Ireland, to dispossess and drive the invaders out of the land, encouraged faction by his own example. He had taken some offence against the inhabitants of a part of Ulster ; and though the enemy were then in the bowels of his kingdom, encreasing in strength and conquest every day, he drew out the royal army against his subjects on the plains of Tailtean, where they offered him battle, and made a great slaughter of those troops, which he might have led perhaps with success in the preservation of the rights and liberties of his country.

Amidst this general infatuation which had possessed the Irish, the people of Leinster seem the first who came to themselves : they saw the progress the Danes were making over the island ; and they saw it with grief and terror. The old Irish spirit was roused ; and they were resolved to give a check to the career of these invaders, or to die nobly like themselves in the attempt. With this view they raised all the forces they could get in the province ; but even in this undertaking, which called for every hand and every heart which was truly Irish, they appear to have been entirely unsupported from the other provinces. They marched however with an intrepid resolution against the main body of the Danes, and a bloody action ensued. All the skill and valour which each side possessed, was on each side exerted ; and the victory remained doubtful a long time. But at last, being wearied by such a hot and vigorous contest, and overpowered by numbers, the Provincialists gave way ; and a dreadful carnage followed them in their retreat. Had they been supported, as they ought to have been, by the royal army and the troops of
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the other provinces, in all probability their fate would have been the fate of the Danes; and they might, in the consequence of such a defeat, have exterminated the whole race then on the island. But the time of their deliverance was not yet at hand. The Danes pursued their victory with greater violence than before, perhaps on account of this opposition. The churches and religious houses which they broke into, seizing the consecrated vessels, and killing or driving away the members belonging to them, were not the only objects of their rage and plunder. The universities at Ardmagh, at Lismore, at Clonard and Cashell, with all the inferior academies that fell in their way, felt the destroying sword and fire of these barbarians: they had no learning themselves, and they paid no regard to learning in other men: nothing civil or sacred escaped their rage; but without any discrimination of people or profession, they swept all before them with a cruel and unrelenting fury.

At the time of these calamities, FELIM or FEIDLIM, who had been king of Munster many years, entered into Holy Orders without laying aside his crown; and presided as Archbishop over the southern half of the kingdom. This is the first instance in which the Royal and Episcopal characters were sustained at the same time by the same person. For though some of their Kings had been enthusiasts enough to turn Monks, yet they laid aside the purple and bid adieu to the world. As much however as FELIM was possessed with the spirit of devotion then in fashion, the spirit of power and domination was not extinguished in him: and we know that such contrarieties are to be seen in human nature every day. As one of these was natural to the mind of FELIM, and the other was acquired, it is no wonder that he made the last subservient to the first, or dependent on it. Thus notwithstanding his episcopal character, the inhabitants of the northern half of the kingdom having incurred his displeasure on some account or other, which is not mentioned, he carried his arms into that part of the country, miserably harrassed the natives, and completed the desolation which was left unfinished by the foreign enemy. At a time when they were struggling for life and liberty with these invaders, this was a step repugnant to policy and humanity even in his character of King of Munster: but in a man, who had

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added.

CONNOR. added the Mitre to the Crown, and who should have shewed in his example the peaceableness of his religion, the depredations he committed were highly culpable. When he had reigned twenty seven years over the province of Munster, wearied out, it is probable, by the calamities of his country, he laid aside both his dignities of King and Archbishop, and retiring wholly from the world, withdrew into a wilderness; where he lived the life of a poor hermit, till death put an end to his superstitious folly. This was enough however, in those days, to acquire him the reputation of a great Saint; and the annals of Ulster have recorded him, as one of the best and wisest anchorets they had. The historians have been kind enough to the memory of CONNOR the King of Ireland, to suppose, because he died a natural death when he had sat fourteen years on the throne, that being unable to redress the miseries of his country, brought upon it by the Danes, he died of grief. But there is nothing appears in the reign of this Monarch to warrant any such supposition; and from what is there said of him, unless he had changed his way of thinking in that respect, he seems not to have laid the misfortunes of his country to heart so much as he ought to have done.

NIALL III.
A.D. 833.

On the death of CONNOR, NIALL the Third, a son of HUGH the Fifth, ascended the throne: and as though this poor country was doomed to be the perpetual theatre of civil discord, the new monarch, though he saw the Danes were still encreasing in strength and power, yet instead of making it his first business to check their progress, and to unite the force of the whole kingdom against them, invaded the Province of Leinster with a numerous army, in order to controul the freedom of election, and to impose a King upon them of his own nomination. No wonder when the Danes were thus unmolested, that they should carry on their depredations in a dreadful manner: nor is it much less to be wondered at, that the success of these ravagers should encourage other foreigners, of the same piratical disposition, to try their fortune in this island. Accordingly some of the Normans fitted out a fleet of transports in this reign, with which they arrived at the mouth of the Boyne; and soon after another party of the same people came with forty sail into the river Liffey. It is said, that these invaders exceeded, if possible, the
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savage Danes and Norwegians in their military executions. They not only devoured the little which the Danish locusts had left upon their coasts, but they made incursions far into the province, and over-ran almost all the county of Dublin with fire and sword. The Irish at this time appear to have been dispirited, and to have lost that fierce and warlike intrepidity, for which they had been renowned through many ages. NIALL III.

But the progress of these new comers alarmed the Danes; who saw that their conquests which they were not settled in, were like to be snatched out of their hands; and that unless they could put an immediate stop to the success of the Normans, the natives, whom they had incensed with a course of ravages for many years, would certainly take vengeance and join against them. Under this apprehension, which was a very reasonable one, TURGESIUS collected all his scattered forces into one body; and with all possible expedition, marched against the Normans. Whether the Irish had any intelligence of this design, or whether they chose to sit still and see their common enemy cut one another's throats, or whether no application was made to them by either party, we are not informed. We only know, that a battle was fought between the Danes and Normans, with a dreadful slaughter on both sides; and after a doubtful contest of many hours, the Danes made such an impression as determined the fortune of the day. The flying Normans were pursued all along the banks of the Shannon to the sea-side; nor did the slaughter cease 'till they were on board their ships.

The Danes, being animated with this success, and finding the country open and abandoned by the Irish, renewed their conquests: and in order to secure themselves, as well against any revolt of the natives, as against the Normans, or other foreigners, they began to build fortifications; and these are some of the oldest monuments of human industry that are now to be seen in Ireland. They still retain the name of Danish Rathes or Mounts; and they are not more remarkable for their antiquity than for their towering height, their prodigious magnificence, and the regularity of their figure. There are other artificial hills thrown up also by these people, but not so high nor so large, and are without ditches round

NIALL III. them; and these were the sepulchres of their generals and chiefs in war.

The Irish seeing these fortifications carrying on, and perceiving from hence, that the Danes intended to make a settlement in their country, if not a conquest of it, at length recovered something of their ancient spirit, and roused themselves from their insensibility. *MALSECHLIN*—for the better sound, says *WARE*, called *MALACHY*—the King of Meath, being ashamed of the tame submission and despondency of his countrymen, collected together all the forces he could, marched against the main body of the Danish army, and pushed them with so much vigour, as to give them a signal overthrow. One of their greatest generals, and seven hundred men were killed in the action: and this might have convinced the Irish, that if they would lay aside their dissensions, and unite against the enemy, they had it in their power to drive them out of the island.

It is impossible, one would imagine, but they must always have been so convinced: but nothing could induce them to lay aside the pretensions of their several families, and to unite with harmony for their common safety. A coward was looked upon among the Irish as the most ignominious of all characters: and their opinion of martial valour, which was carried to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, made it extremely difficult to bring about a reconciliation after a quarrel. For as each party dreaded the name of a coward, if they made the first overtures of a peace, so no overtures were made at all; but the quarrel continued from father to son, and very seldom ended but with the entire extinction of one of the families. It is no wonder that a people with such a natural disposition, accustomed from their infancy to fear nothing, and animated by the example of their fathers and friends upon all occasions, should encounter dangers or death with the greatest intrepidity. An elective form of government to the monarchy and the provinces, where so many families had pretensions that were nearly equal, meeting with such a fierce and vindictive habit of mind and manners, not only generated and maintained a spirit of faction, but it was a spirit of faction that was unappeasable. If the reader will attend to these reflexions in
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their full extent, he will find a clue that will unravel all the mazes of civil discord, so fatal to this unhappy island for many ages ; and which at the time I am now writing of was the chief cause of those miseries which the Danes inflicted. NIALL III.

As broken and disunited however as they were among themselves, they could not be brought to submit to these foreigners without compulsion ; and many battles were fought in which the old Irish valour prevailed over their enemies. The Princes of the two provinces of Munster and Leinster joined their troops together ; and attacked the army of the invaders with such irresistible fury, that the Earl of TOMAIR Prince Royal of Denmark, and twelve hundred men were left dead in the field of battle, and a general rout of the Danish forces ensued. In short so many attacks were made upon them by the natives with success, that finding their fortune begin to abate they sent for a reinforcement ; and when they had thus recovered their strength, they laid siege to the city of Dublin and took it by storm. Here they built a Castle, which not only served for their own defence, but from which they could ravage all the adjacent country. The same use they made of all their other garrisons, to the terror and annoyance of all the inhabitants in their neighbourhood ; for the whole land around them was made a desert like an uninhabited wilderness. The reader will be apt to ask what the Monarch of Ireland was about all this time ; having heard nothing of him since his accession to the throne, and his imposing a King upon the people of Leinster. How it is possible he could sit still amidst these repeated cruelties committed upon his country, though they did not reach him, one is at a loss to know : but nothing more is said of him in a reign of thirteen years, than that he plundered and destroyed two inconsiderable territories at the head of a numerous army.

Awakened however at last from his dream of safety, ill becoming a Monarch in his situation, and above all an Irish Monarch in whom a warlike spirit is inherent and invincible, he engaged the Danes in a pitched battle, and gained a compleat victory. It were pity that this Monarch had not either sooner shaken off his negligence, and acted up to his character in the defence of his country, or that he had lived a little longer to have completed

NIALL III.

the overthrow of the Danes, and to have driven them out of the island. But in a short time after this victory, coming to the banks of the river Callain with a design to ford it, and finding it swelled to a great height with some heavy rains, he ordered one of his retinue to try the depth of it, before he ventured in with all his train : but the stream being very rapid and washing him off his horse, and those whom the King had ordered to his succour not being willing to risque their lives, NIALL himself resolved to hazard his own person in order to save him. With this view he pushed his horse boldly to the side of the river where the man was drowning ; but the ground being undermined with the washing of the water it immediately gave way, his horse and he were both tumbled into the river, and they shared the fate of the man whom the King had attempted to save. If this Monarch therefore gave no proof in his life of his zeal and activity to serve his country, he left a signal evidence of his humanity at his death ; and this makes it probable, that it was not so much his fault, as the fault of the times, and owing to some untoward conjunctures, that he did not exert himself sooner against the common enemy.

MALACH. I.
A. D. 846.

Historians are not agreed about the succession of the Monarchy on the death of NIALL ; some of them saying that TURGESIUS usurped the sovereignty, and was proclaimed King of Ireland by his countrymen, to whom the Irish submitted. Others are entirely silent on this event ; and in a regular succession place MALACHY the King of Meath, nephew to the last CONNOR, on the throne of Ireland. The last appear to me to be most in the right. For though TURGESIUS might be proclaimed by the Danes and Easterlings, and might assume the title of Monarch, nay though he might and certainly did, rule with a more despotic and arbitrary sway than any Monarch that had gone before him, yet the Irish most certainly did not acknowledge his title ; they paid no other obedience than what was forced from them in the way of arms ; and they elected MALACHY for their sovereign. It must be owned however that he was a sovereign little more than in name ; and the usurper, who had been above thirty years in the country before he took the title of King, plundering and destroying the inhabitants without mercy, had no greater accession of authority from his royal station than he had before. The difference therefore between the historians on this subject is rather nominal

nominal than real : and if TURGESIUS was Monarch only among the MALACH. I. foreigners—as my manuscript says—yet the Irish were held generally in the greatest subjection to him. No sooner had this foreigner assumed the royal authority, which, from their attachment to the family of their ancient Kings, he knew would disgust the natives to the last degree, than he dispatched messengers to Norway to notify this event, and to desire an immediate augmentation of his forces that he might be able to support his pretensions. Nor was this precaution unnecessary. For a people that were so brave and jealous of their liberties as the Irish were, could be kept under by nothing but a superior force ; when they saw these liberties trampled upon by foreigners, and their ancient sovereignty in the Milesian line wrested out of their hands.

The request that TURGESIUS made to his countrymen was soon complied with. A great fleet of transports filled with regular troops was sent from Norway, and landed on the western coast : and if the natives had reason to complain before of the loss of their property from these piratical Easterlings, they were now deprived of their liberty. They were forced by droves like sheep into captivity ; and such as escaped were obliged to retire into woods and wildernesses with their families, and lie exposed to the miseries of want and nakedness, in order to preserve themselves from slavery. The sea coasts were ravaged in the same manner, by sending different parties round the island in their boats ; and no words can paint out the various species of misery which the poor inhabitants underwent. The cruelties of fire and sword ; of rape and plunder, of violence and captivity, were all united under the usurpation of TURGESIUS. A government established in this manner, must necessarily overturn the laws and religion as well as the rights and liberties of the nation ; the only rule of administration being the usurpers will, and that usurper being a Pagan and a tyrant. This was in fact the case at that time in Ireland. The churches and monasteries were desolated and consumed, the laws were a dead letter, and all religion and learning were suppressed or banished the island.

The more warlike the spirit of the Irish was, the more enthusiastic their attachment to the Milesian line of Kings, and the more jealous they were of
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MALACH. I. their liberties, the more their necks must be galled with the oppressive yoke of this usurper. But even all this could not bring them to a spirit of union among themselves; and faction, which is always the disease of liberty, proved mortal now and occasioned its death. Particular Princes, it is true, spirited up their tribes, and fought many times with great success against their oppressors: but these engagements were not the fruit of united counsel, had in concert with each other; and were therefore more properly skirmishes and rencounters, than general actions in defence of the common cause, and for the extirpation of their enemies; and the event was answerable. For notwithstanding these victorious battles over the Danes, the usurper still possessed the government, and the fate of the country remained undecided: the loss of their troops was continually supplied with fresh recruits from Norway, which were poured in upon them in great numbers, whilst the natives were diminishing even with their successes. The Irish being at length dispirited and worn out, were obliged to yield themselves vanquished, and to submit to the tyranny of their Danish masters; who ruled them indeed with a rod of iron, and made them taste of the very dregs of servitude.

But as much as the ancient spirit of the Irish was broke at home, thro' their own dissensions, yet it shone abroad at this time among their descendants in North-Britain; who, after a series of struggles against the Picts, entirely routed them, under KENETH MAC ALPIN, then the King of Scotland. This overthrow was so complete, that nothing remained but the memory of that fierce and barbarous people, which had so long flourished in Great Britain: and the Scots exchanged their Highlands for the better part of the present kingdom of Scotland. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that KENETH should be had in reverence among them as a very illustrious Prince, and as one of the founders of their monarchy: and if Ireland had not been destined by Providence to be given up as a prey to faction, in order, as we may believe, to tame their spirit of animosity and licentiousness, the same Scots, no doubt, would have assisted them to restore the Irish monarchy, under which their ancestors were nourished, to its usual vigour. But peace and prosperity, which are the blessings of an united and religious people, were yet at a great distance from this ill-fated country.

TURGESIUS having brought the whole island into subjection, he made it his next business to new model the state; in order to secure himself in the government which he had obtained by force. Thus into every barony he put a Danish King, where before there had been an Irish one: for what we call Lords of the Manor, in those days they called Kings, as it hath been explained in the Introduction. Into every district or parish was placed a captain of war; every ville had a serjeant, and every house a soldier. The Bishops and Clergy were for the most part retreated into bogs and wildernesses, into woods or subterraneous caves, where they preserved their historical monuments, and where they hid and lurked about like wild beasts. Their country was no longer the Island of Saints, nor the mart of literature to the rest of Europe. The men of learning had taken themselves away to seek repose in other countries; as we may learn from a letter to the Emperor CHARLES the Bald, who gave them a kind reception. "Why do I speak of Ireland, says the writer, that whole nation almost despising the danger of the sea, resort to our coasts with a numerous train of Philosophers, of whom the more famous abdicating their native soil, account themselves happy under your favour, as the servants of the wise SOLOMON."

When the city of Ardmagh was sacked, all the clergy, the religious, and the students of that university, were made prisoners by TURGESIUS, and shipped off for Limerick, then in the hands of the Danes; and what was their fate afterwards was never known. In every church or monastery that was not reduced to ashes, and near the ruins of those that were, a lay Danish Abbot had his residence; in order to collect the revenues with which they were endowed. All the books that could be met with they burnt or tore to pieces; the schools and seminaries of learning were shut up or destroyed; and the inhabitants were not permitted to teach their children to read. Every bride was obliged to lie the first night after her marriage with the Danish captain of the territory in which she lived; but if she was not to his taste, he had a certain tax in money in lieu of her virginity.

MALACH. I. These are only the outlines of that cruel bondage which the native Irish were held in by their Lords the Danes : the particulars are still more shocking and insupportable. It has already been taken notice of, that a soldier was quartered in every house and cottage throughout the kingdom ; but the reader has no idea of the miseries entailed upon every family by that regulation. Here was not only a spy upon every action, every word, and every look, but the soldier was also the absolute master of the house, and of every person in it. Not a chicken could be killed, not an egg, nor a little milk used for any one, till he was first satisfied and his leave obtained : and if he had a mind to lie with the wife or daughter, he must not be denied, lest his resentment should dispossess them of all they had. Neither the cries of the infant, nor the wants of the diseased, which required milk, were in the least regarded by this brute ; and he would oftentimes devour it wantonly, to create the greater distress, and to enhance his inhumanity. Many of the Irish at first refused to comply with these oppressions ; but then the soldiers of the neighbouring houses joining together, they were dragged by violence to the guard, which they kept in every country ; and there imprisoned and cruelly used 'till they had made satisfaction to their guests, whom they had offended by their disobedience.

None of the gentry or nobility were allowed to wear any clothes, but what the Danes had first worn out and laid aside : the young ladies were not permitted to work at all with the needle ; and the sons of the Irish chiefs were prohibited the use of arms, or to exercise themselves in any feats of activity or in martial sports ; lest they should be qualified and tempted to shake off the yoke of slavery now about their necks. Every master of a family throughout the island was obliged to pay an annual tribute to the government of an ounce of gold ; and if he was remiss in the payment, whether through utter inability or not, he was punished with the loss of his nose ; which occasioned it to be called by the name of the Nose Tax. In short, all the natives of every rank were prohibited under the penalty of the severest fines and imprisonment, to make any public entertainments, or to use hospitality among each other ; in
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order to prevent any caballing or contriving against the government for the restoration of their liberties. MALACH.I.

Such, and so dreadful was the bondage in which the Irish were held by these barbarians; but yet nothing could bring them to an union among themselves. This is a conduct so utterly incapable of any excuse, that if one might presume to interpret the dark ways of Heaven, and to judge of things so far above our reach, one would think that the miseries which fell upon this people through the savage cruelty of the Danes, were dealt out by providence as a just return for those evils, which their everlasting contentions brought upon one another. Be this however as it might: the excess of tyranny practised by TURGESIUS, at length roused some of them from their desperation; and by the event it was very evident, that it was not owing to the superior power, or skill, or valour of these foreigners, that they trampled thus over the rights and liberties of the Irish, but to their own spirit of discord; and that they rather chose to suffer themselves, than that those whom they hated should not be miserable.

In one of those Danish raths or forts already mentioned, TURGESIUS had built a palace for his residence; which was not far from the palace of MALACHY the King of Meath, and the rightful Monarch of Ireland. As he would sometimes condescend to visit and to be entertained by his brother King, he became acquainted with the person of one of his daughters, who was extremely beautiful: and he demanded her for his pleasure. The King endeavoured to persuade him that there were many young ladies in his family or his neighbourhood, of much greater beauty than his daughter, and which he did not doubt would please him better. The passions of the tyrant had been strangers to any denial; and as he was much enflamed with a desire for the Princess whom he had seen, he declared his resolution to take her away, and possess her.

As much as MALACHY was stung with this resolution, and determined in himself to frustrate it, he had presence of mind and command enough over his temper, to smother his resentment at that time; and to seem even pleased with an honour which his heart abhorred as the foulest infamy.

MALACH.I. With equal artifice and dissimulation he persuaded the brutal tyrant to believe, that the yielding up his daughter to the embraces of so great a King, whose friendship it would ensure him, was a thing to be rather pleased with than disliked : but since the inclinations of TURGESIUS lay to the pleasures of the bed, he was desirous they should be gratified with greater beauty than his daughter had to boast of : and therefore if he liked the proposal, MALACHY would send her at a certain hour the next evening, accompanied with fifteen other blooming virgins, the meanest of which should surpass his daughter in beauty : out of these when they were all before him, and taking the opinion of some of the most skilfull among his Lords, he might select his game as he pleased : if the Princess then should be most agreeable to him, she was not too good to be at his service ; but if any other should presume upon his leavings, MALACHY hoped he would remember whose child she was.

The lascivious Dane was not only satisfied, but extremely delighted with this proposal ; and was lavish in his thanks and praises to MALACHY for the contrivance. He was then going to Dublin to a convention of his chiefs upon affairs of state ; in order still further to defeat the hopes of the natives, to defend the country from other invaders, and to perpetuate the succession to the government of the island among themselves. As soon as the business was finished, and the council had been entertained, the usurper selected fifteen of the company who were his greatest favourites, to whom he communicated this intrigue ; and to whom he promised to sacrifice a beautiful young virgin if they would go with him to his palace. The proposal was not made with greater pleasure than it was accepted ; and they all repaired to the court of TURGESIUS with great impatience. The mind of MALACHY, though for very different reasons, was not less at rest. Nothing was further from his intention, than the delivering up his daughter, who was indeed extremely beautiful, to gratify the lust of this libidinous Dane ; and yet he knew his own life must not only pay the forfeit of his refusal, but that his daughter must also still be the prey of his brutal appetite. What did he do therefore in this dilemma, but resolve upon an attempt, which, if it miscarried, would leave them in no worse situation than they were in before ; and if it succeeded—as he had great reason to hope it would—must
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rid him for ever of this savage tyrant, whom it would sacrifice to the violence of his own lust. MALACH. I

Accordingly he got together fifteen of the most lovely fair young men in his territories, on whose spirit and resolution he could depend; and after communicating the secret of his purpose to them, and taking their engagement to execute it to his wish, they were all attired like young ladies, and every one armed with a short sharp sword under their robe. He then instructed them in the part they were to act, and assured them that he would follow with his guard at a little distance to second and support them in what should remain to be done. Thus accoutred and disciplined, the Princess and her companions went at the hour appointed to the Danish palace; where they were no sooner arrived, than they were conducted to the apartment where the Monarch and his associates were waiting to receive them. In order to disgust the ladies as little as possible with their appearance, all their arms were left below; and their outward air of complacency and satisfaction, kept equal pace with the inward pleasure that employed their minds.

But the Princess and her retinue were inspired with a love of another kind, a love of liberty and their country; which they were resolved to redeem, or to perish in the attempt. Thus the one side thought of nothing but excessive dalliance and indulgence of desire; and the other was prepared for assassination. Accordingly when TURGESIUS had compared the Princess with her train, and embraced her as a token of the choice he made, they one and all drew their swords at the same instant, and put every one of the Danes to death; except the tyrant himself, who, according to their instructions, was bound with cords they had brought concealed for that purpose. The signal was then given out of the window, as it had been agreed upon, to MALACHY and his guards; who broke into the fort sword in hand, and, giving no quarter, the officers and soldiers fell promiscuously in the carnage, and not one escaped to tell their fate. The revenge of the Irish being thus fully satiated for the present, MALACHY made it his first business to seek out and triumph over the usurper. Having upbraided him with a short narration of his monstrous cruelties, his many rapes and murders, and a

MALACH. I. general state of his oppression and tyranny, he ordered him to be heavily loaded with irons, and to be dragged along in his procession to grace the victory.

No sooner was this success over the Danes made known out of the fort, but it spread like fire over the island: and the news could not be quicker, than was the resolution of the Irish to throw off the yoke which had so long enslaved them. As soon as the Danes understood that their King was taken prisoner, the principal nobility slaughtered, no quarter any where given, and themselves without a leader, they became in their turn dispirited: and as though the genius of TURGESIUS had been the charm that had exalted his own countrymen and depressed the Irish, no sooner was it broken by his imprisonment, than the Danes lost all their courage; and the natives, like men awakened out of a dream of slavery, were amazed to find themselves the conquerors. Such of the Danish invaders as lived near the coasts, betook themselves to their shipping with all possible expedition, and left the island. But those who had possessed themselves of the inland country, were obliged to retreat into their cities and fortified places to secure themselves by their numbers. This retreat however availed them nothing. The Irish had now recovered their pristine spirit; and as though it had acquired strength from lying dormant, it every where burst out with a double fury. The towns and forts where the Danes had taken shelter were assaulted and stormed with rage rather than valour; the woods and wildernesses, in which others had concealed themselves when the Irish quitted them, were cleared of their new inhabitants with an unrelenting vengeance: no solitude nor flight was able to protect them from an enemy whom they had enraged with the vilest treatment: in short, the Irish were determined to make use of this opportunity to extirpate these barbarians at once out of the land, to complete the revolution, and to establish their government upon its antient footing.

When the usurper had been kept some time in fetters, in order to punish his haughty spirit, and to make him a witness to the miseries of his countrymen, he was drawn to Lochannin by the command of MA-

MALACHY, amidst thousands of spectators exulting in his fate, and, bound as he was, thrown in, and drowned. Thus ended the life of the accursed tyrant TURGESIUS, after perpetrating a series of cruelties for many years abhorrent to our nature : leaving an example to the world, how miserable and unexpected their fate often is, who consulting nothing but their interest and the gratification of their passions, think by cunning or violence to establish themselves in their power and greatness. The small remainder of the Danes, who could neither save themselves by flight nor by their valour, were reduced to the necessity of begging quarter, and of promising to become obedient and useful servants to the Irish : and the peace of the country being now secured, and the fury of the inhabitants in a great measure abated by the execution of the Usurper, and by the slaughter or the flight of the greatest part of his men, these few were received to mercy ; and being disarmed their lives were spared.

Whether MALACHY was elected Monarch of Ireland on the death of NIALL, as the most correct and the greatest part of the historians say, or whether the Irish being then over-run and intimidated by the Danes, made no election of a Monarch, but submitted to TURGESIUS who usurped the government, as others say, yet it is on all hands allowed, that he was the Monarch at the revolution brought about by the usurper's death: He was King of Meath at the time when NIALL the Second died ; and though he might be elected Monarch, he had it not in his power to assume the sovereignty, and continued still in his former station ; which might occasion this difference among the historians, as I have said before. But as it is agreed, that he was acknowledged to be the Monarch of Ireland at the drowning of TURGESIUS, and the expulsion of the Danes, so at that time we find him taking the reins of government into his hands, assembling the states of the kingdom in a general convention, and resettling the constitution upon its ancient footing. In this convention, the Lords and Princes, and provincial Kings, were each restored to their jurisdiction : and though they could not recover all their treasures of gold and silver, and jewels, the spoils of many foreign Princes brought home to Ireland through many hundred years by their predecessors,

MALACH.I. cessors, yet every private person was restored to his land and cattle, and the state recovered its civil policy.

The reader will perhaps imagine, that they had seen so many instances of the fatal effects of their dissensions, that they should have resolved henceforward, by common consent, to lay aside their animosities, and to establish peace and harmony. Indeed they had not only had experience of the evils introduced by a tyrannous enemy through their dissensions, but they had also seen something of the comforts of mutual love and friendship, during the thirteen years of the usurpation, and which their common calamities, by a natural consequence, had effected. The arts of peace at home, and commerce abroad, had in some sort been cultivated by their enemies; who were not unacquainted with trade, and with other countries. Hence they saw the folly and madness of their ancestors, in employing their time and strength in cutting one another's throats, which they might have employed so much more to their own glory, and to the public good, in fitting out ships, extending their commerce with foreign nations, and in securing their country by fleets and fortifications against all invaders. Though their late subjection had been intolerable, yet they could not avoid perceiving the advantages which arose from commerce, and from rest and tranquillity to the community: and in fact we are told, that hence they began to relish a life of quietness, to dislike their former state of turbulence and contention, to consider the danger of an open country ready to call in an enemy, and to wish there was less discord, and more strength and order, in each other's dominion.

Had these wise considerations had their due effect, and been carried into execution, the evils of their late subjection would have produced a real good to the nation. But the Irish were not a people to be taught even by their own experience; or to speak perhaps with more propriety, neither the loss of their wealth, of their blood, of their learning, of their religion, and their liberty; neither the destruction of their provinces and constitution; neither the terrors of men, nor the judgments of heaven, could subdue in these people their natural disposition to quarrelling and
contention

contention for the sake of power, and persuade them to public concord. MALACH. I.
It was not however, till some little time after the restoration of their government, that any opportunity for contention offered : and this time, which should have been spent in providing a naval force, in repairing the Danish fortifications which in the height of their fury they had demolished, or in erecting new ones on their coasts, they wasted either in ease which was unmanly, or in exercises which were unprofitable. Nay, they would not be at the trouble so much as of guarding their sea ports, which were their principal defence against invaders : but employed their late vanquished enemies to whom they had given a pardon, and who were retained in their pay, to be their guard in those places that were of the first importance. Who then can wonder, that a people thus infatuated, and not to be taught wisdom by God or Man, should be again exposed to the calamities they had before endured !

The Danes had had such a taste of the riches and fertility of the island, that though they had been driven out by the valour and martial fortitude of the natives, yet they could not help entertaining hopes, by some means or other, of regaining a settlement among the Irish. After many consultations among the chiefs to this purpose, it was at last agreed to send a fleet of ships in the way of traffick, with goods and merchandise of various sorts, without any appearance of hostile force or instruments of war ; but yet under the conduct of three of their best Generals, and with a sufficient number of arms concealed, which might be ready when occasion offered. The project being thus concerted was immediately put into execution ; and the author of the Polychronicon gives this account of the expedition. “ After the death of TURGESIUS, the three brothers, AMELANUS, CYRACUS, and IMORUS, went in a peaceable manner from the ports of Norway ; and under the pretence of exercising trade and commerce as merchants, they arrived with their followers on the island, and with the consent of the Irish, who had given them up as an inactive people, they occupied the maritime places, and built the cities of Waterford, Dublin, and Limerick : but their numbers encreasing daily, they often insulted and disturbed the natives.” Lest the reader should be misled by this account, it may be proper to let him know, that these cities
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MALACH. I. had been built many years before this expedition; but having been burnt down or sacked in the first Danish war, as it is called, the meaning here must be, that they were re-edified out of their ruins.

It is plain from the testimony of this author, that the Norwegians by this device, and under the conduct of these officers in the disguise of merchants, had made the Irish the instruments of their own destruction. For they not only obtained settlements in the best parts of the island for their purpose, but they gradually improved them by making fresh acquisitions continually, 'till they had it in their power to dispute the whole with the natives, and oftentimes to enslave them. This is called by the historians the second Danish war; and if it is not called so with impropriety, yet it was a war which was made up of many wars, and which continued near a hundred and fifty years—some peaceful intervals excepted—before they were all extinguished. For the country from whence these foreigners swarmed, whether called Norway or Denmark, or by the more general name of Scandinavia, was an inexhaustible store both of men and shipping; and enabled them consequently to bear up under all defeats, and to extend their commerce to the most distant countries. But these advantages would not have enabled them to subdue the Irish, if the Irish themselves had not assisted them by their own dissensions. For while the petty Princes were contending against and tearing each other to pieces for trifles, the Danes took the opportunity of their being thus weakened; and subduing the victor and the vanquished, forced each of them to confess their superior power, and own them for their masters.

They had not lived long in peace and plenty, and in the enjoyment of their liberty, before their natural disposition to feuds and animosities broke out again and carried all before it. The same contests prevailed about the government of a province, a barony or district, as heretofore; and were in the same manner decided by the longest sword. A state of order and tranquillity was not natural to their form of government, and therefore could not be of long continuance. A spirit of revenge countenanced by their laws as well as their manners, soon occasioned eruptions
of

of intestine discord and animosity. This in short was the ruling passion MALACH. I.
of these people; and no considerations whatever could get the better of it. We have seen how they fell into the snare of the Norwegians, at the recovery of their liberties from the same sort of men: and as though this was not giving their enemies advantage enough against them, they soon after added this of quarrelling with one another sword in hand. These advantages were no sooner given than taken; the Norwegians possessed themselves of all the sea ports and fortified places; all the foreign trade of the island was chiefly carried on by them; and the infatuated Irish gave them no disturbance. Some of their old neighbours the Danes being informed of this success, renewed their attempts on some parts of the island on the old score of plunder: the opposition they met with from the old inhabitants was feeble and fruitless; but harassing the infant city of Dublin and the territories adjacent, in which the Norwegians were equally, if not principally, concerned, it was more their business than that of the Irish, to stop their progress and drive them out.

A select body of troops was therefore got together as fast as possible, with which they marched against the Danes and offered them battle. The challenge was accepted, and a bloody battle ensued; the Irish being entirely neutral. The Danes at last obtained the victory; the Norwegians were defeated with the loss of their best forces, and a thousand men were left dead in the field. Encouraged by this success, the Danes lost no time in improving their victory; they dispossessed their enemy, and driving them out of the island, took their stations and their wealth together. After this they turned their arms against the natives, in order to secure what they had possessed themselves of, as well as to acquire the same authority over the Irish as their predecessors had enjoyed; and they succeeded in both. But as they had gained such a happy settlement in the fertile lands of Ireland, it was looked upon as a provision for a Prince of the house of Denmark; and accordingly one of them came to take the command of all the Danes dispersed throughout the island. AMELANUS was the name of this royal chief; and he no sooner put himself at their head, than he fought the natives who had revolted, with great advantage, imposed heavy contributions, and reduced them to a state of servitude.

MALACH. I. The natives, being wearied at length with these oppressions, saw the necessity of uniting together to shake them off. Very great pains had been taken by one EAGNA, a religious, notwithstanding this conviction, to bring about an union sufficient to this purpose ; so great an animosity subsisted at that time, between some of the Princes of the southern, and the inhabitants of the northern half of the island. A truce however having been agreed upon, the Monarch MALACHY issued out his summons for a general convention of the States of the kingdom. It required no long deliberation to prevail upon themselves to follow the good old man's advice : and as the King of Offory had behaved himself with petulance and rudeness to him, as it may be supposed, when EAGNA attempted to persuade him to this union—for I can see no other reason for the resolution—it was resolved that he should not only make a submission to the Priest, who had laboured this point with unwearied diligence, but also that the King of Offory and the son of the King of Munster, should conclude a peace with the northern half of the island ; that they might all of them be at liberty to unite their forces against the common enemy. It is strange, that any pains should be necessary to accomplish such an union in their circumstances ; and not less strange, that one man only should be found, of public spirit and good sense enough to project and undertake it. But it seems so it was ; and we can have no pretence to disbelieve or be surprised at it, in this country, where every body's business is thought to be no body's ; and where instances of this sort, in matters of great importance too, have very often happened. But to return to Ireland.

In pursuance of the resolution agreed upon in the convention above-mentioned, but not before the King of Munster had been stoned to death by the Danes, the Monarch having raised a very powerful army marched against them, and gave a signal overthrow to the Danes in battle, those especially who were quartered in and about Dublin, in which the greatest part of them were slain. MALACHY lived but a short time to enjoy the fruits of his victory ; and of his throne he can scarce be said to have had any enjoyment. For during the first thirteen years, he was rather the slave of TURGESIUS

than the sovereign of a kingdom, and the three years of his reign since the death of that tyrant, had been full of distraction through the frequent attempts and successes of his enemies, and the tumultuary dissensions of his own subjects. In all probability, if he had lived a little longer, as the peace of his kingdom was then established, for a time at least, he might have proved as successful against the Prince of Denmark, as he had been against the Norwegian tyrant and his followers. He appears to have been a man of equal courage and ability; and the Irish wanted nothing but an union under such a leader to defeat their enemies, as the event had made it appear. Let me not be mistaken, as imagining that the Irish were never to be vanquished with equal numbers: I only mean, that in fighting with equal numbers against an enemy, and not against each other, their martial fortitude, or more properly their martial fury, would generally obtain the victory; and yet the Danes were not wanting in valour and intrepidity. But there was something in the military genius of the Irish, to be better conceived perhaps than expressed, which, if not overpowered by numbers, for the most part gave them the superiority.

MALACH. I.

HUGH the Sixth, the son of NIALL the Third, who had been King of Temoria, ascended the throne on the death of MALACHY, and possessed it sixteen years. Whether the union of the kingdom was dissolved by the death of the Monarch, and the election of his successor, which is not improbable, we are uninformed. My reasons for thinking it not improbable that the union was then dissolved, are not only the natural disposition of the Irish, and their almost constant practice to quarrel on such an event, but also because we find in a short time after, a battle was engaged in against the Danes with a Prince of Meath at the head of the Irish, in which the Prince and most of his people were cut to pieces. This perhaps might be only a rencounter instead of a battle, though AMELANUS is said to command the Danes; or the Irish might be surprized and set upon in their march, and so be obliged to engage whether they would or no. But be all this as it might, for it is all conjecture, AMELANUS immediately after this engagement, transported his forces into Scotland; and, according to the fashion of his country, plundering

HUGH VI.
A. D. 863.

HUGH VI. the inhabitants, and making many of them prisoners; he returned to Ireland with a great booty.

If the union had been dissolved on the death of MALACHY, it seems now again to have been revived: at least we find the Monarch at the head of a numerous army attacking the Danes in a pitched battle in Ulster. All the forces on each side seem to have been collected on this occasion; and as the engagement was general, so likewise was the defeat. The foreigners were routed with the loss of twelve hundred slain in the field of battle; and the heads of forty of their chief officers were brought away in triumph. The remainder of the army, who were not wounded or taken prisoners, retreated to their fortifications: hither the Irish pursued them, and being flushed with their last victory, attacked and beat them; recovering all the spoils and plunder which they had made. The palace of AMELANUS built in one of their Rathes, was set on fire by some of the natives, and quite consumed: but during the confusion which the fire put the garrison into, the Irish soldiers attacked them with such incredible fury, that very few escaped; and a hundred of their principal officers were numbered among the slain.

AMELANUS himself lived to revenge on the Irish this general rout of his whole army; by one of those actions approved in the art of war, but in which valour, or manly fortitude have no share. As the Irish army were returning home from their victory, in separate bodies, he laid an ambuscade for one of them, in which two thousand were surprized, and either killed or wounded, or taken prisoners. After this, he marched with all the forces he had left to Ardmagh; and plundering that city and its environs, with all the rage of an incensed and disappointed enemy, they went off in haste to their ships, and left the island. There is nothing more said of the Monarch HUGH, but that he died a natural death: and as we hear no more of the Ostmen or Danes in Ireland for seven years, and the country was returning apace to its usual state, so we are come now to a proper conclusion of this book, which has treated of nothing but the calamities of war and discord.

HUGH VI.

The ecclesiastical history of this country, during that period, affords no other views but of ruined monasteries, churches demolished, and neglected discipline. It is therefore no wonder that we meet with so little matter relating to church or state. For the greatest part of the monasteries, where the memoirs of all transactions were deposited, having been demolished, the historians who have wrote of these disastrous times; have most of them wrote from memory or tradition; or at least without the assistance of such original memoirs. But indeed the clergy being despoiled of what was intended for their subsistence, they were obliged to quit their function, and to turn to the exercise of arms that they might defend their country: and therefore it so happened, that there were very few men of learning whose labours could afford us any real light. Such a prodigious change had the calamities of so long a war produced in the Irish nation!



THE

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
I R E L A N D.

B O O K IX.

FLAN.
A. D. 879.

AS great a figure as the Danes and Easterlings have made in Ireland, for almost an hundred years past, yet the time was come at last, when it pleased GOD to give some respite to the Irish from these savage enemies. HUGH the Sixth saw this effected, but he did not live long enough to enjoy the fruits of it; and FLAN, the son of MALACHY, who had been King of Temoria, ascended the throne on the death of HUGH. The crown was scarce fixed on the head of FLAN, before he found it necessary to raise an army and invade the province of Munster. Whence arose this necessity, or what it was that should induce a Monarch, as soon as he was elected, to invade one of his provinces; is one of those events among many others, which annalists have not given themselves the trouble of recording; and which their posterity therefore
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can only guess at. One would think by the revenge that was taken, if we were not a little acquainted with the spirit of that people, that the provocation must have been very great : for the provincial troops of Munster, being either unprepared to resist the attack, or being unwilling to oppose the Monarch, the whole country, it is said, lay exposed to the fury of the royal army ; which, after they had plundered the inhabitants, carried many of them away into captivity. No sooner therefore was the island cleared of its foreign enemies, than the natives returned to their old inveterate custom of being a plague to one another. Nor was this which hath been mentioned the only instance of it. DONOLD, one of their chiefs, was treacherously assassinated by some of his pretended friends ; and the King of Ulster was murdered in an inhuman manner by his own subjects, which occasioned great disturbances and bloodshed in the province.

But all these animosities were at length happily terminated ; and a settled peace and tranquillity all over the island for some years ensued. The Archbishop of Cashell, CORMAC MACCUILLNAN, commonly called the holy CORMAC, was at this time in possession of the crown of Munster ; and to the pious care and abilities of this King, all the historians have attributed the happiness which Ireland then enjoyed. Whether this is attributed to him justly, and without partiality, may, I think, admit of a question. The Monarch of Ireland, it is probable, was as much employed in bringing about a reconciliation among the contending parties ; as he had certainly more authority, and was interested more in a general peace than CORMAC : but then he was not an Archbishop as well as a King ; and consequently the Monkish writers would not be so much inclined to celebrate his praises as those of the holy CORMAC. But to whomsoever it was owing, the island being delivered from intestine discord as well as foreign enemies, it wore a face of prosperity which it had not done for many years before. The lands were every where cultivated and manured, and yielded crops in great plenty : the churches, abbies, and other religious houses, began to be repaired or rebuilt : many academies and schools of learning were again opened, for the education of youth in arts and sciences as well as languages : their former miseries began to be forgotten by the inhabitants, and no other prospect appeared than of a general happiness throughout the land.

But

FLAN.

But this was too great a blessing for the people of Ireland long to enjoy : and notwithstanding the praises which are given to Holy CORMAC by the old historians, it is easy to see that they are much exaggerated ; for if he was the only person who had the merit of bringing about the tranquillity above-mentioned, to him must be ascribed the blame of being the first that overturned it. The reader has been told already, that the characters of King and Priest were united in the person of CORMAC : and so general a peace prevailing over the island, that he had no opportunity of making a figure in his Kingly character, he determined to do something extraordinary as an Archbishop. He proposed therefore to celebrate the feast of Easter, which was approaching, with great state and magnificence at his palace of Cashel : and to this end he dispatched a messenger to the inhabitants of the territory adjoining to it, demanding a sufficient quantity of provision for his table and retinue during his stay at Cashell, upon that occasion. But the inhabitants being strangers to such a demand, and though they might not have objected to entertain him as their Archbishop, with such a modest and humble train as is necessary to that character, yet the royal dignity required more expence than they chose to undergo for his reception ; and they gave a flat denial to his demand. The tribe of Dalgais belonging to his province, and who were very renowned in arms, distinguished their loyalty upon this occasion. For they no sooner heard of this uncivil usage of their King, than they sent in the provision which was necessary for the support of his royal dignity whilst he staid at Cashell ; and which was received with great acknowledgments.

To this free gift perhaps it was owing, that CORMAC in his Psalter hath taken occasion to celebrate the extraordinary valour of this tribe of the Dalgais. The Psalter of this poetical King and Archbishop, CORMAC CULLENAN, is quoted by KEATING as still extant ; and it particularly sings the praises of this martial Clan, as making the vanguard of the army of Munster, in all its marches and attacks against the enemy, but in its retreat forming the rear : in short, though they were as meek and merciful as Saints, says the Poet, yet they were of a courage

not

not to be subdued. It may be proper to acquaint the reader, that by a younger branch the Princes of these people were the descendents of OLIOLL OLUM, who had the country of Thomond for their possession, and who always took up arms in defence of the Kings of Munster, against any other provincial troops, and particularly against the army of the northern half of the kingdom. There were twelve Cantreds in the division belonging to the crown of Thomond, and their territories extended to the walls of Cashell.

The King of Munster having met with the refusal above-mentioned, from the people of Eaganach, in the neighbourhood of his See of Cashell, and subjects in his province, was determined to try their affection to him upon another occasion. Another messenger was therefore sent to them, to desire they would assist him with some of their best arms and horses, in order to enable him to make such presents to the strangers who should repair to his court, as were not unbecoming his own dignity, or unsuitable to their desert. The messenger was instructed also to insinuate to them, that as they must be sensible of the obligations which they lay under to him, and had not yet paid him the usual compliments on his accession to the crown of Munster, so the King had assured himself of their compliance with this request.

What these obligations, or these usual compliments were, we are not informed: but it is plain, that the King thought one way upon this occasion, and the people another. For though they did not absolutely give a denial to this demand, as they had done to the former, yet their compliance fell little short of a refusal. They looked out all the battered mean arms they had, and the most disabled useless horses that could be found; which they sent to the court of CORMAC. The loyal tribe of the Dalgais resented this affront as they had done the other; and collecting some of their finest horses and furniture, with a great quantity of arms, and some jewels, which they had saved or taken from the Danes, made presents of them to their King. No wonder that CORMAC in his poetical compositions should mention this people with respect and honour: and it is as little to be wondered at, that the Monkish writers of that time

FLAN.

should do all that was in their power to illustrate the character of this royal Prelate, who appears to have been a great friend to their order.

But although these historians represent him under all the favourable circumstances that they can, as a just and learned Prince, whom fortune favoured in all his undertakings, whom his enemies dreaded, and whom his subjects almost adored, yet they have let slip so many particulars of another sort, as go a great way in destroying the high opinion they seem to desire we should conceive of him. The principal nobility and gentry of his province advised him, it is said, to invade the territories of Leinster, and to demand a tribute or chief-rent from the inhabitants ; which, if they refused to pay, his army should take by force. An enterprize of this nature we may be sure could not be agreeable to the holy CORMAC, if he was such a Saint as they represent him : but upon the deliberations of his council, and particularly by the instigation of FLAHERTY, Abbot of Iniscathy, he raised a numerous army, consisting of the flower of his provincial troops, and prepared for the expedition. After they have owned this, which does not make much for his character, the historians tell us that the King was not inclined to proceed, because he foreknew from a prophetic spirit he was endowed with, that he should lose his life in the action.

The Boromean tribute from the province of Leinster, to the Monarchs of Ireland, we have heard of over and over : but what tribute could be due to the King of Munster, or upon what account the Leinster people should make an acknowledgment of subjection to that King, it is impossible for us to say. There is nothing in the history, as I remember, that can warrant any such claim ; and if there was, it had been worn out by time and accidents. When the whole Island therefore was enjoying rest and tranquillity, and the spirits of men were grown calm and sociable, to involve these two provinces, and perhaps the greatest part of the kingdom, in a new quarrel on that account, was a conduct unworthy of a good King ; but in an Archbishop was highly criminal. Whether the tale of his pretended prophetic spirit, which the historians have artfully introduced, in order to make the world believe that he was impelled to this undertaking absolutely against his will by the importunity of his council, will exculpate CORMAC from
this

this crime, shall be left to the reader's determination. But surely he might have a presentiment of his death in the approaching battle, as many a man has had, without a prophetic spirit; and many a man too has been deceived in such a foreboding. However if he was endowed with a prophetic spirit—which the writers of those times most commonly give their Saints—it must be owned that he paid an ill compliment to it, to prefer the advice of his friends before it.

If the reader thinks that I am tedious in the relation of this quarrel, and in discussing the several circumstances attending it, as perhaps many readers may, then I must be free enough to say, that I write not for such as them. This is the sort of historical facts which shew the workings of the human mind; of which this history hath been hitherto much more barren than I could have wished it: and to say the truth, they are the only facts which relieve the labour and reward the pains of a writer of any judgment, or which furnish pleasure or improvement to a reader of any taste. No wonder therefore will it be, that I should catch with some eagerness at all that come in my way; in order to answer the best and the only valuable purpose of writing or reading history.—But to return to the design of CORMAC on the province of Leinster.

Having concerted the proper measures for this important expedition, the King then proceeded to settle his private affairs; and being very poetically inclined made his will in verse. Under the same persuasion that he should never return from this war against the province of Leinster, he sent a messenger for LORCAN the King of Thomond to attend him in his camp before he passed the frontiers. The summons being obeyed, and a council of the principal nobility and officers of the province of Munster having been called, the King informed them that he thought it necessary, before he entered upon action where he apprehended he should lose his life, to settle the succession to his crown after his death; in order to prevent any tumults, and to defeat the pretensions of contending factions. Then taking LORCAN by the hand, he presented him to the council as his lawful successor, according to the will of their great ancestor OLIOLL OLUM; who ordained that the crown of Munster should descend alternately to the posterity of his eldest and his

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second son. It must be observed however notwithstanding this demise, that through a long succession of forty four Princes, the posterity of the eldest son only had enjoyed the crown; and that the tribe of the Dalgais inherited the territories of Thomond, as it hath been said, under the Princes descended from the younger son; of which number was LORCAN whom CORMAC nominated to succede him in the throne of Munster.

This is a signal instance of the vanity of human foresight; and will teach Kings that they may decree, but that the ratification depends upon the will of Heaven. OLIOLL OLUM had ordained that the succession to his province should be alternate in the posterity of his two sons; and contrary to this injunction, the crown had been enjoyed by four and forty descendents from the eldest son without interruption; and those of the youngest son had during that period been confined to the little government of Thomond in that province. Again, CORMAC MAC CUILLENAN having a great friendship for LORCAN, whose tribe had given such remarkable instances of loyalty as have been mentioned, was desirous that the crown of Munster should devolve at his own death upon him. He had an ancient title of six hundred years date to plead; but then it had been set aside in forty four successions. CORMAC however hoped to revive it in favour of LORCAN, and to prevent any disturbances in the province after his death: but though he called a council for this purpose and nominated him in form, yet the council after the death of CORMAC annulled his nomination, and gave the crown of Munster to another. A very sufficient proof, that he was not so much adored by his subjects, as the historians would have us believe.

The provincial troops being assembled at the place of rendezvous, the King, being attended with his favourite the Abbot of Inis-cathy, who was the chief promoter of this war, put himself at their head; and marched towards the confines of the province of Leinster. When he arrived there he ordered the whole army to halt, and sent a herald to the King of that province, to demand a yearly tribute as a testimony of subjection, or hostages for the payment of it; and in case of refusal to declare war. Whilst he was waiting in expectation of the return of the herald, an accident happened to

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FLAHERTY the Abbot; who would make himself a General, as his master, who was an Archbishop, had made himself a King. The Abbot being more inclined to arms than to count his beads, made use of this leisure to ride through the ranks and to view the camp, in order to assure himself of the force of the Momonian army. But while he was upon this exercise, his horse, being trained to a convent and not a camp, took fright at the noise and glitter of the arms, and fell with his rider into a ditch. Had his neck been broke by that fall, it might have proved a lucky accident to the King and his army, as well as to the province of Leinster; as he was the principal incendiary that had stirred up the war. But as he survived this accident, it had no other effect than to strike a terror into the soldiery; many of whom, looking upon it as an unfortunate omen and despairing of success, resolved not to wait the issue of a battle, and deserted.

When the herald returned, he was accompanied with ambassadors from the province of Leinster, desiring to enter into a treaty with CORMAC; and that there might be a suspension of hostilities in the mean time, or if the treaty should prove ineffectual, untill the May ensuing. The harvest it seems was just then begun; and it was a mutual benefit to both provinces, that the decision of the dispute, if it must be decided by arms, should be postponed untill the following spring. However to induce the King of Munster to accept this proposal, and to convince him that it flowed from a sincere desire of peace, the King of Leinster sent him a very considerable present in money and jewels, and offered to send hostages to remain with a neutral Abbot untill the treaty should be concluded. Nor did he forget to send noble presents to the Abbot of Inis-cathy, whose influence with the King he was but too well convinced of. But the Abbot, like other courtiers, made no scruple to accept the presents, though he did nothing to deserve them; nay though he used his interest to the prejudice of the donour: and he who ought to have been the minister of peace was the only obstacle that prevented it.

When the ambassadors had made the proposal above-mentioned, it appeared so reasonable to CORMAC who was not inclined to the war, that he declared his readiness to accept it; and even condescended to ask FLAHERTY to acquiesce.

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acquiesce in his determination. But the furious Abbot, who had fomented this quarrel between the provinces, and who delighted in war, was not only so implacable as to reject the proposal with indignation, but he carried his insolence so far, as to upbraid the King of Munster with cowardice for listening to it: he even told him in the presence of the ambassadors, that the paleness of his countenance apparently betrayed his want of courage; with many other expressions reflecting on the conduct and personal bravery of the King. This is one of the effects, and not one of the most odious, of a Prince's delivering himself up blindly to a favourite; who almost always consults his own interest or passions more than those of his master, though they make his master despised, and himself hated. This was exactly the case of the Abbot of Inis-cathy. The King of Munster, who if he had done himself justice should have from that moment banished the Abbot from his councils, contented himself with only denying FLAHERTY's charge against him; saying it was not through fear, that he was averse to the war, but through the apprehension he had of the evil consequences of it; which would certainly prove fatal to his own life, and might end in the Abbot's destruction.

Though CORMAC suppressed his resentment of the insolence with which his favourite had traduced him, yet there can be no doubt but that it stung him very severely, for we are told that as soon as he had made this reply, he retired to his tent, with very evident signs of melancholy and disturbance in his countenance. As soon as it was known that the audience of the ambassadors was at an end, the chief officers of the army repaired to the King's tent to be informed of the result of it. The King assuring them that the war must be carried on, and expressing great uneasiness and dejection on that account, as well knowing that his death was at no great distance, the officers endeavoured to cheer his spirits and persuaded him to refresh himself. But CORMAC was not to be so diverted: the presentiment of falling in the field of battle fate heavy upon his mind; but he commanded the company not to divulge the secret upon any account, lest it should intimidate the troops, with whom he intended to sell his life at a dear rate.

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After a short conversation of this kind, his Majesty desired to be left alone, that he might spend the little leisure he had from public affairs, in preparing himself for his dissolution. To this end he sent for his confessor to the tent, and added a codicil to his will, relating to his interment, if they could recover his body from the enemy. At the same time came MANACH, confessor to the King's confessor, a man of real piety and benevolence; in order to heal the breach if possible, and to persuade the King to avoid the shedding of so much blood. When he had used all the arguments that could be drawn from humanity and religion, in support of his advice, which he addressed no doubt to CORMAC, in his character of Archbishop, and found they were urged in vain, he then applied himself to him as a soldier and a King; shewing the little chance there was of his success from the superior number of the enemy. He informed him, that FLAN the Monarch of Ireland, disgusted at his refusing such honourable conditions as had been offered him, had joined the forces of Leinster with the royal army, and was then actually at the palace of that King with his guards, as his auxiliary. He represented therefore to CORMAC, the prudence and policy of accepting the hostages as preliminaries of a treaty; instead of referring their dispute to the decision of a battle, in which it was almost certain his army would be defeated.

The King of Munster could have had but a small share of that wisdom, justice, and goodness, for which the historians have so much extolled him, if he had not been won by this advice: and it was no sooner known in the camp, that the royal army had joined the troops of Leinster, than that many of the Momonian soldiery deserted, which still made his number less; and all that remained declared for a peace. They talked aloud of the reasonableness of the terms, and of the quality of the hostages that were proposed, being of no less rank than Princes; the son of the King of Offory, and the son of the King of Leinster; they even openly accused the Abbot of Inis-cathy, as the seducer of the King in this quarrel, and as the author of all the miseries it might produce.

But

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But CORMAC, with all his wisdom, justice, and goodness, though he was convinced by MANACH's reasoning, by his own inclinations, and by the aversion which his army shewed to the war, that it would be unjust, that it would be dangerous, nay, that it would be destructive to carry it on, yet so enslaved he was by his favourite—as all Kings that have favourites are—and his favourite was a man of such an impetuous, overruling, implacable disposition, that nothing could soften him into compliance; and nothing could tempt the King to thwart him. Orders were therefore given to strike their tents, to break up the camp, and march on towards the enemy. When they came to the plains of Magh Albhe, which the King intended for the field of battle, a camp was marked out and fortified by the side of a wood, in which he staid to receive the enemy. The order of battel was here appointed, by which the army was divided into three bodies, the first was commanded by the King of Offory and the Abbot of Inis-cathy, CORMAC himself commanded the second, and at the head of the third was the King of the Deisies.

When an army engages in a cause which they dislike, under a King whom they despise, and a General whom they hate, it is no wonder that they fight without courage and without spirit: the forces of Munster were under all these circumstances; and to add to their discouragement, the enemy were represented as being five to one. On the other hand, the allied army, with the Monarch of Ireland at their head, having a good cause to fight for, and a much superior force, came on to the field of battle as to certain victory. But this was not all that was on their side. As soon as the signal was made for battle, a Momonian General of the blood royal, who had been from the first averse to the war, and detested the influence of the favourite, rode through the ranks, and addressing himself aloud to the soldiers, and accusing the rashness of the Abbot, persuaded them to leave the priest and his clergy to fight it out by themselves, and to save their own lives by flight. Having said this, he clapped spurs to his horse, and galloped out of the field: and the soldiers who heard,

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and saw what had passed, were so dispirited, that they threw down their arms at the first charge, and shifted for themselves.

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Nor was this the only accident that struck a pannick into the forces of the King of Munster. Another General, of no less a rank than the King of Offory, who had the joint command of the right wing with the Abbot of Inis-cathy, being amazed and shocked with the dreadful slaughter of his men by the superior numbers of the enemy, rode full speed out of the field; calling to the soldiers to follow his example before it was too late. This advice being instantly taken, the rest of the army were so discouraged, that the defeat became universal. The engagement was begun with so irresistible a fury, and the flights were so sudden that it lasted but a little time; and the chief of the slaughter was in the pursuit. The King of Offory was himself too late to escape: and if any persons of rank were saved, after the first fury of the allied army was abated, they were saved not so much from a principle of humanity, as for the sake of a large sum expected for their ransom. Many of the eminent clergy, principal officers, and nobility, among whom were six of the petty princes of Munster, fell in the action of that fatal day.

The Abbot of Inis-cathy, the author of all this mischief, was among the prisoners; and perhaps he would have thought it happier to have been of the number of the slain. The King of Munster, who exposed himself at the head of his troops in the front of the battle, was flung from his horse into a pit with so much violence, that he was not able to rise: and being seen in this situation by some of his men who were flying out of the field, they remounted him on another horse with some difficulty, and left him to shift for himself. He soon discovered one of his officers, who was much in his favour, making up to him; and understanding that his army was entirely routed and the slaughter almost incredible, he commanded the officer instantly to leave him, and provide for his own safety; which with great reluctance was complied with. CORMAC, according to his prediction, expected every moment when his enemies would fall upon him without giving him quarter: but his death was such as might have happened in any other field as well as in a field of battle. For the King attempting to climb a steep ascent—made exceeding slippery says the historian with the blood of the slain—his

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horse made a false step, and tumbling with his rider down to the bottom, the neck and backbone of the King were broke, and he died upon the spot.

Thus ended the life of the famous CORMAC MAC CUILLENAN, archbishop of Cashell and King of Munster; who had not most certainly that consummate wisdom, and many eminent virtues, which the writers of those times attributed to him. The reviving those feuds and animosities in the kingdom which had lain so long a-sleep, by making warlike preparations against the King of Leinster, and his refusing those honourable conditions offered him that he might prosecute that war, these fully the virtuous part of his character very much. But the giving himself up so entirely and implicitly to the direction of his favourite the Abbot of Inis-cathy, contrary to his own judgment and the advice of all his council, nay, contrary to his interest, and the dictates of prudence and common sense, this is such an impeachment of his wisdom and understanding as no excuse can wipe away. His body being found by some of the soldiers of the allied army, they cut off his head and carried it in triumph to the Monarch of Ireland. But FLAN, who had humanity as well as valour—and in a civilized people they are seldom seen apart—instead of rewarding or commending the soldiers for this service, as probably they might expect, upbraided them for violating the law of nations, which forbids the mangling of the dead; and commanded them out of his presence as a set of barbarous ruffians, who had no more veneration for the dignity of a King than for a common trooper. Then taking up the head, and kissing it, the tears standing in his eyes, he lamented the instability of all human greatness, and the sad untimely fate of so religious a Prince and so venerable a prelate; he ordered the body to be searched after, and when it was found, to be interred along with the head according to his desire. Such was the fruit of a war entered into unnecessarily against the judgment of the people and the inclinations of the King, in order only to humour a furious implacable hot headed Abbot, and an insolent overbearing favourite.

Is it not strange, that there should be this long detail of the quarrel and war between the two provinces abovementioned, and yet that we should meet with

with nothing else, though in a time of profound peace from their foreign enemies, through a period of seven years; not one convention for the regulation of the state, nor any foot-steps of a council held on the score of religion? To what must we impute this barrenness of the great historical facts of a nation, that had so much public business to transact, and so many men of learning to record it? Must we not impute it to the barbarous rage of their Danish and English enemies, which swept all before it? I think we must. For the same men who were so circumstantial in the relation of this dispute, without doubt had given accounts of other affairs in that age, which deserved the attention of posterity as much or more than this: and yet little more is come down to us, except a few particulars which can scarcely be said to deserve a place in such a work as this.

Of such a sort would be the will of CORMAC abovementioned; if it did not serve to give us an idea of the men and manners of those times. His golden vestment which he wore as an archbishop in divine service, his clock, his royal robe embroidered with gold and jewels, his armour and coat of mail of polished steel, his golden chain, and his wardrobe, he bequeathed to particular friends; and his legacies to abbies and religious houses are thus enumerated: an ounce of gold, an ounce of silver, his horse and furniture to Ard-finnan; a gold and silver chalice and vestment of silk to Lismore; a gold and silver chalice, four ounces of gold, and five of silver to Cashell; three ounces of gold and a mass book to Emly; an ounce of gold and an ounce of silver to Glendaloch; a horse and furniture, an ounce of gold, and an embroidered vestment to Kildare; three ounces of gold to Inis-cathy; three ounces of gold, an embroidered vestment, and his blessing to Mount-garet; and four and twenty ounces of gold and silver to Ardmagh. The royal psalter which preserved, he said, the ancient records and monuments of his native country and which were faithfully transcribed, he left to Cashell where he built the cathedral, to be deposited for the use of future ages. These are the particulars mentioned of the will of CORMAC: and if we consider the excessive scarcity of gold and silver in those times, compared with their infinite profusion at present, these were not inconsiderable trifling benefactions for a provincial King. They were such as many

FLAN. sovereign Princes of Germany are not able to make even in this age of plenty.
—but to return.

When FLAN the Monarch of Ireland had refreshed his troops after the victory, and received the acknowledgments of the King of Leinster for his assistance, he marched to Ossory. The King of that territory, which was under the King of Munster, it has been observed, was slain in the action; and there being some dispute among his brothers about the succession, the Monarch went thither to settle it. This being settled to his satisfaction by placing the crown of that petty kingdom on the head of DERMOT, the elder brother, FLAN returned with his army to his own palace. Besides the honour of the victory, CAROL the King of Leinster led home his forces loaden with spoils, and a great number of prisoners of the most distinguished rank to grace his triumph.

Among the foremost of these, was FLAHERTY Abbot of Inis-cathy, and who was of the blood royal of Munster. The clergy and people of Leinster were so enraged against this man, and so deservedly, as the only author of the war, and the cause of all the bloodshed on both sides, that they upbraided him, as he was led along, in the most opprobrious language; which to one of his haughty imperious spirit must be a mortification more painful perhaps than death. Nor was this the only punishment inflicted upon him: for he was imprisoned very closely and very severely treated during the life of CAROL, and for a year after his death. It will be out of the order of time, but as his story is not connected with any other part of the history, I shall finish it here at once. When he was released from his imprisonment and had received his pardon, the Abbess of St. Bridget, apprehending the mob would tear him to pieces, prevailed upon some of the clergy to go with a guard and escort him out of the province of Leinster. He retired to his monastery of Inis-cathy, and gave himself up to devotion; under a due sense, one would hope, of his former unrighteous spirit. Here he continued in the regular exercise of a religious, till the throne of Munster became vacant by the death of CORMAC's successor, to which he was then called as the next heir: and notwithstanding his former insolence and self will, he had learned so good a lesson by the fate of his advice and by his imprisonment,

ment, that he governed this province with great applause to his death; possessed of the affections as well as the obedience of all his subjects. FLAN.

In a short time after the great battle of Leinster, FLAN the Monarch died a natural death, after the extraordinary long reign of thirty seven years; and NIALl the fourth, son of HUGH the sixth his predecessor, succeeded him in the throne. The Danes having had intelligence of the late dissensions in Ireland, thought this was a proper season to renew their insults upon that island; which they knew would be a successful and a dangerous expedition, as long as the Irish continued united among themselves. A great fleet was therefore now fitted out for the invasion of Ireland: and before NIALl had tasted the sweets of royalty or was seated well in the throne, he was obliged to put his life and kingdom upon the hazard of a battle in the plains of Ulster: which though it ended in his favour, yet proved very bloody to both armies. NIALl IV. A. D. 916.

About the same time another party of these foreigners landed on the coast of Leinster, and ravaged that province with their usual cruelty. The King gathered his forces as soon as he could against them, and gave them battle. But his forces were routed by the skill and conduct of the Danish General; and above six hundred of the provincial troops left dead upon the spot. Encouraged by this success, they sent home for a supply of men and arms to enlarge their conquests. A reinforcement was sent as soon as possible, and arrived under the conduct of SITRICK, and the sons of that experienced general, who had got the victory in the last engagement. No sooner had they joined the former body, than they renewed their hostilities with their accustomed fury; and the city of Dublin was taken by storm.

The Monarch being alarmed with the reinforcement, and their success against his capital, resolved to oppose their progress; and collecting all the force he could in so short a time, which through too much haste was inferior to the enemy, he gave them battle. Had he staid to collect the choicest troops of the four provinces, instead of two, though it would have been at the expence of more plunder and violence, his resentment
in

NIALL IV. in the end would have been cheaper to his people, and the defeat of the Danes might have been complete. But NIALl being a Prince of great resolution and intrepidity, and being impatient to take his revenge on these insulting enemies, he marched against them only with the northern forces; and to this he owed his own defeat and death, and his country their misfortunes for many years. The Irish made the attack with their usual fierceness, and mowed down the ranks of the Danes with a terrible slaughter: but these pouring in fresh numbers continually, and the strength and spirits of the Irish being exhausted, the Danes fell upon them in their turn with great fury; the vanquished natives gave way; the pursuit was hot and bloody; and NIALl, with most of his Generals, fell in the field of battle, with his sword in his hand, in defence of his country and deserving a better fate.

DONO. II.
A. D. 919.

On the death of this Monarch, who sat but three years on the throne, DONOGH the second, a son of the late King FLAN, was elected to succeed him: a man of mean abilities, and unworthy of his descent, as well as the crown he held; if we may judge from the inconsiderable figure which he made in a reign of five and twenty years, amidst great distractions of his country. The first public occurrence of this reign which is handed down to us, relates to a short contest about the succession to the throne of Munster on the death of FLAHERTY the Abbot of Inis-cathy so often mentioned above. KENNEDY the son of LORCAN, whom CORMAC nominated for his successor, put in his claim upon this vacancy, and he had a great party for him. But the mother of CEALLACHAN, a Prince of that house, fearing her son should be excluded from his right, who had no military force to support it, and being a woman of address as well as spirit and resolution, she went to KENNEDY alone and unattended, expostulated with him about the injustice of his design, and asserting her son's title persuaded his rival to relinquish his pretensions.

The affair of the succession to the throne of Munster being thus adjusted, and CEALLACHAN proclaimed King of that province, the Danes made such bold incursions into it at that time, that he was forced immediately upon a battle to defend his crown. In this, and several more
which

which followed close upon one another, the advantage was on the side of the provincial troops; and in one of them the wife and sister of the Danish General were taken prisoners; who were treated by CEALLACHAN with great politeness at Waterford till their release. The Danes were reduced to such difficulties by so many defeats, that they thought proper to abandon the province of Munster, and to look out for other settlements; and for the present they joined themselves to their countrymen in Dublin, and its adjacent territories, appointing SITRICK the General to be their King.

The historians make this man the son of TURGESIUS, the old tyrant they had smarted so much under; and I wish it was the only instance of their want of precision, through a negligence of chronology and calculation. His grandson he might be; and though it was not impossible, yet it was highly improbable, he should have been his son. But be the relationship what it might, the qualities of his mind were not unsuitable to his descent. The same savage cruelty, hate, and treachery, which were practised by the former, were equalled if not exceeded by the latter. To be drove by force of arms from the fertile province of Munster, where the Danes under his conduct had made themselves settlements in and near the sea-ports, was an event that wrung the proud heart of SITRICK; and therefore what he could not effect by force, he was resolved to atchieve by fraud.

Having found out that DONOGH the Monarch of Ireland, was upon ill terms with CEALLACHAN the King of Munster, to whom his own defeats had been chiefly owing, he thought it expedient for the success of his whole plan, to communicate it to the Monarch; without whose approbation it would not be policy to attempt the execution of it. The King of Munster, who was of an enterprising spirit, and of a genius much superior to the Monarch, had refused, it seems, to pay him the usual tax or chief rent, claimed by his predecessors as sovereigns of the island, and the homage and submission always made to them as such. His reasons for this refusal do not appear; and if they did, perhaps it would not be in our power to vindicate this refusal. The Monarch however had the old remedy to have recourse to, the calling him to an account at the

DONO. II.

head of his army. But CEALLACHAN had given so many shining proofs of his valour and conduct in the field of battle against the Danes, that the Monarch chose rather to sit down quiet under the injury, than to try to redress it in a hostile manner.

When SITRICK therefore communicated his stratagem to him, in which he hoped to destroy the King of Munster, instead of being startled and shocked at the treachery, as even a generous enemy would have been, the Monarch not only consented to, but applauded it: nay he went further; he promised the perfidious monster who projected it, his friendship and alliance after its execution. The Dane having secured this material point, proceeded directly upon his plan. He sent a messenger to CEALLACHAN, to inform him that as he did not intend to renew hostilities against the province of Munster, and yet had a great desire to remain in Ireland, so he should be very glad to enter into a treaty offensive and defensive with him; and to shew his own sincerity in this proposal, and to cement the alliance the stronger, he offered him his sister of the royal house of Denmark, a lady of great beauty, in marriage. If these terms were accepted, he promised to send Danish hostages of quality to ensure the performance of them.

The messenger of SITRICK had no sooner made these proposals to the King of Munster, than he accepted them. The King himself was honest and open hearted; and a suspicion of treachery never entered into his thoughts. He had seen and conversed with the Princess when she was his prisoner; and being naturally amorous, and fired with the remembrance of her beauty, the dishonour of marrying into the family of the mortal enemy and invader of his country, and of acquiescing in their settlement there, appeared under the specious disguise of establishing peace and tranquillity in his province. Thus being overjoyed, instead of being startled, with the proposal, he required no hostages; he made no difficulties of acceding to a treaty offered him by an inveterate and a vanquished foe; he scrupled none of the terms of it; and in short, as though this proposal contained every thing, which these savage invaders could do to atone for the miseries which they had brought upon his native country,

or which the Irish ought to desire for their security against them for the future, CEALLACHAN sent back the Danish messenger with an assurance of his consent to the treaty offered, and of his repairing as soon as possible to the court of SITRICK, in order to ratify it by his marriage with the Princess.

Nothing was now heard of in the province of Munster but the noble and expensive preparations for this journey and wedding. Besides a splendid retinue and a princely equipage, orders were given for the guards and the choicest troops of the province to be got in readiness to attend him; in order to conduct the Queen home to his palace with the state and magnificence which were suitable to the occasion, and to her quality. As soon as KENNEDY was informed of the King's intention, for whom he had kindly waved his own pretensions to the crown, living always after upon terms of strict friendship with him, he represented to CEALLACHAN the great imprudence of taking the flower of his troops as well as his guards; and, for the sake of making a little more parade, leaving the province open and defenceless against any invader. A suspicion of treachery on the part of the Dane never struck the mind of KENNEDY more than it did that of the King; and it is no wonder. For if he considered at all, the terms of accommodation were so advantageous to the foreigners, without any acquisition to the natives but a wife for one of their Princes who well deserved her, that there was no room to suspect any insidious purpose under this proposal.

But there was great room to suspect, that the Monarch of Ireland, who was incensed at the refusal above-mentioned of the usual homage and tribute, might take this opportunity, if the province was left unguarded, to invade and plunder it: and KENNEDY no doubt had this suspicion upon his mind, though the historians say nothing of it, when he advised the King to take with him only a few of his body guards, and some of the young nobility; offering his own son, a Prince of the house of Munster, to attend him. It is not improbable that KENNEDY, who was zealous for the good and safety of his country, and by not being entangled in the charms of love for the Princess, had his mind free and disengaged, might discern the weakness, if not the danger and dishonour, of this alliance; and perceiving that, might

Dono. II. attempt to dissuade the King from entering into the treaty. The King however, it is certain, would look upon that argument with very different eyes; and all the reasoning of KENNEDY upon it would have been in vain. This is not, it must be owned,—historian-like—laying the cause of CEALLACHAN's conduct very deep: but I have always been of opinion, that, instead of diving into the secrets of the cabinet, in order to find the motives of the conduct of Princes, if historians would descend from the character of politicians and be only men, if they would study the progression and the artifices of love, and dive into the intrigues of the bedchamber where any such can exist, they would bid fairer than they do for a true explanation of public councils; even of councils which produce the most important revolutions in every country. The truth and pertinency of this reflection must be the apology for its introduction here [a].

However CEALLACHAN might be blinded as to the impropriety of the treaty, yet he saw clearly enough the importance of that advice which KENNEDY had given with regard to the province: and therefore taking with him only his body guards, a few of the nobility, and DUNCHAN the son of KENNEDY, he began his journey; committing to the father the care of the province during his absence. The news of his arrival within the environs of Dublin, where the Danish Prince kept his court, being brought to SITRICK, his wife, who was an Irish lady of great family, expostulated with him upon the imprudence and mean spiritedness of giving so fine a woman, as his sister was, to a provincial Prince, the mortal enemy of the Danish race; and who had been the means of destroying so many of their prime nobility. But SITRICK, who had nothing further from his heart than this

[a] The unnatural lasciviousness of one of our own Queens, which—without having heard any anecdotes relating to it—is easily enough to be collected from the letters published in certain memoirs about thirty years ago, was the sole occasion of greater familiarity and a more unlimited confidence and submission, than any interest or abilities could merit, or than was ever seen before, from a sovereign to a subject of the same sex. But the favourite taking advantage of this irregular passion, and becoming insolent and imperious, grew disgustful: above all, the passion was diverted to a new and much younger object; and this was the true and only source of a catastrophe in politicks, perhaps the most extraordinary that ever happened in any country; but which contemporary writers have laboured with great art and refinement to explain from other causes.

alliance, heard his wife's expostulation with great patience ; and though she was a native of Ireland, yet she was his wife, and he had a confidence in her fidelity. He told her therefore very frankly, that he had made this proposal with no other view in the world than to get CEALLACHAN into his power, and to effect that by stratagem which he could not do by force. Instead of the nuptial pleasures which the King promised himself with his sister, he assured her that his Majesty should be made a sacrifice to the ghosts of those renowned Danes whom he had destroyed.

The wife of SITRICK heard the discovery of this secret with real horror and astonishment ; but she had presence of mind enough to hear it without any visible emotion or dislike. Could a native of Ireland, could a woman of a good heart, could a Christian hear of such an infamous piece of treachery in order to execute such a savage purpose, and not conceive a detestation for the horrid monster who had contrived it ? Could such a man, though he was her husband, be entitled to her fidelity, when that fidelity must make her a partaker of his guilt ? What then had she to do under this dilemma but to act the part which she did act ? she arose early the next morning, and disguising herself as much as she could, went privately out of Dublin ; taking the road which she knew that CEALLACHAN must come through. As soon as he arrived at the place where she stood, she discovered herself to the King, related the horrid treachery of her husband, and advised him to seek his safety in a quick retreat. Having thus quieted her mind, without bringing SITRICK into any danger, she made the best of her way home unobserved by any body. Though no other motives than what have been already assigned, are necessary to account for the conduct of this lady, after the secret of the perfidy was disclosed to her, yet a motive seems to be wanting to account for her great unwillingness that the King of Munster should be married to her husband's sister ; with which, as an Irish woman, and a woman of sense, she should rather have been delighted. There should therefore be another reason for this inconsistency, as well as for the step she took to preserve him ; and it seems there was another, more powerful than all these put together ; of which perhaps some of my readers may have formed a suspicion, though it hath not been mentioned : she had been secretly in love with CEALLACHAN from the time that she was his prisoner at Waterford.

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with SITRIC's sister. As little therefore could she endure to see him in the possession of another, though she was a woman of honour and could not hope to enjoy him herself, as she could to see him sacrificed to her husband's vengeance.—But to return to the King of Munster.

As soon as he had received this authentic intelligence, which equally mortified and amazed him, he turned back with his retinue in order to escape the snare which had been laid for him, and which he was so near falling into. But whether SITRICK had any suspicion that his secret had transpired, or whether he apprehended that CEALLACHAN might escape the assassination when he had him in his hands at Dublin, he ordered two parties of Danish soldiers, one on each side of the road, at a distance not to be discovered, to close in his rear as he advanced towards the city, that his retreat might be cut off. No sooner therefore had the King of Munster made a motion to return, than he found himself stopped and surrounded by the guards of SITRICK, who did great execution among his men. However when his men had recovered from the surprise which such an unexpected attack had thrown them into, and had received the King's orders to revenge themselves as well as they could, no time was lost, and no valour was wanting, in falling upon the Danes with a true Irish fury. They fell upon them indeed so irresistibly, that, had it not been for reinforcements continually coming in, the Danes would have been entirely cut to pieces. But they were so near the city when the skirmish began, that the alarm was given immediately; and fresh men poured in so fast upon the Irish, that they could never diminish the number of the enemy, though their own was diminishing every moment. Though their resistance therefore was long and resolute, yet it was impossible to prevent their defeat; and it was the hard fate of the King, and of his friend DUNCHAN the son of KENNEDY, to be taken prisoner, and led in triumph into Dublin.

There is no doubt but SITRICK would have been much better pleased if they had increased the number of the slain; as his trouble about them would then have been at an end. But when they were delivered up to him as prisoners of war, he might have had a scruple in putting them to death; not a scruple of conscience—for he had been deaf to that long before—but a scruple of fear; lest such a flagrant violation of the laws acknowledged in all civilized countries might be returned upon himself and his own people. He offered
them

them therefore such terms of ransom, as he was confident would not be agreed to; and if those were refused, he declared his resolution of removing them to Ardmagh in so many days, and transporting them thence to Norway. The terms of ransom were no less than the delivering into his hands the towns of Limerick, Cashell, Waterford, and Cork, with all the strong garrisons in the province of Munster, and an erick or fine for every officer or soldier killed by the Momonians in the battles fought with the Danes by CEALLACHAN; for the performance of which conditions, the Prince of Munster, and all the sons of the Princes and Chiefs of the province, were to be hostages.

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When the King heard these exorbitant demands, he desired leave to send one of his own domesticks, who was taken prisoner with him, to the province; in order to know whether their liberty would be purchased by it at this rate. This request being granted, and the terms of their ransom declared to the messenger, the King instructed him privately, to tell KENNEDY, that be his own and DUNCHAN's fate what they might, he should never allow the Danes any footing in Munster: that he should assume the government of the province in his absence; send DONOUGH his general, with the best troops he could get together, to Ardmagh, in order to rescue them out of the hands of the Danes, who would soon remove them thither; and order all the ships in the harbours of Munster to Dundalk, where the Danish fleet lay, lest the army should not arrive soon enough at Ardmagh.

With these advices, the messenger was dispatched to KENNEDY; whom he found in a condition almost ready to execute them. For when such of the guards, as had the good fortune to escape, returned home from the late skirmish, and related the news of the Danish treachery, with the slaughter of their comrades, and the captivity of their King and DUNCHAN, the whole province was in an uproar, and waited for nothing but the word of command to revenge the perfidy of the Danes, and to rescue the royal prisoners. This word had therefore been given by KENNEDY as the next in succession to the King; and the troops were almost all assembled, when the messenger arrived from CEALLACHAN.

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If the people of the province were fired at the treachery of the Danes, and their own King's captivity, their resentment was not assuaged by the terms insisted on for his ransom; and KENNEDY had no other trouble in pursuing the instructions brought by the messenger, than in communicating their contents. A thousand of the Dalgais had been assembled by his orders about Cashell; and three thousand of the Eugenians had been collected through the zeal and activity of the General DONOUGH. When the express therefore arrived with these advices from the King, the forces were joined as soon as possible; and being put under the command of DONOUGH, and the three brothers of KENNEDY, who were to assist him, they began their march towards Ardmagh. But before their departure, in order to inspire the General with particular zeal and ardour upon this occasion, KENNEDY addressed him with a representation of the nobility of his descent, the magnanimity and heroism of his ancestors, who had been Kings of Munster, the probability of his success against their perfidious enemies, and the importance to the province, and the glory to himself, which would be derived from it. In their march they were joined by several other parties of the Dalgais, out of Thomond and other places; which, before they had quitted the province, made the army not less than six thousand strong.

I have already taken notice, as a very extraordinary and amazing circumstance in the history of the Irish, that though they had been so often, and for almost an hundred years, subject to the ravages of the Danes, though they were situated upon an Island, and were no otherwise therefore to be attacked by these Barbarians than by sea, yet in all this time we hear of no naval armament among the Irish. Fleets of transports to invade Britain and Gaul, we have read of in some centuries past; but no military skill on board ships, either to defend themselves or attack an enemy, hath till this occasion been related. We are now told, as it hath been observed, that CEALLACHAN sent instructions for all the naval force of Munster to be made ready, and to engage the Danish fleet, which were riding in the harbour of Dundalk, in order to carry him into Norway. This order being obeyed with the same alacrity that had been
shewn

shewn in collecting the land forces, the command of the expedition was given to FAILBHE, the King of Desinond; and about the same time that the army began its march towards Ardmagh, the fleet set sail for the harbour of Dundalk, consisting of seventy ships well manned and armed. Though neither cannon nor fire arms were then invented, yet how such a force as this, so capable of annoying an enemy with their arrows, darts, and javelins, in close quarters, and their swords and daggers when they laid each other on board, came to be so long neglected, it is impossible for us to say; nor can any good excuse, in my opinion, be invented for them.

While the army halted in Conaught, for the sake of forage and provisions, a party of archers, and another party armed with swords and targets from Munster, to the number of five hundred each, joined the main body in support of the common cause; the deliverance of their King, and the son of KENNEDY. The forces of Munster were by this time grown to a very formidable army, which raised contributions upon the country for its subsistence. The Prince of Conaught, who ought perhaps to have lent his aid against the Danes, finding the people aggrieved and harrassed by these contributions, applied himself to the general; and remonstrated against the injustice of plundering those who were not parties in the quarrel; desiring that he would order the booty to be restored, which the Momonian foldiers had collected. Had this remonstrance and demand been as just as they were unreasonable, it was not in the power of DONOUGH, to prevent the one, or to comply with the other. The army was marching against the common enemy of the Irish; it was impossible to carry sufficient provision with them; it must be subsisted on its march; and their friends ought voluntarily to have furnished them without any compulsion. But to shew the Prince of Conaught, that it was merely for the sake of subsistence, and not of plunder, that the army distressed the subjects of his father, DONOUGH assured him, that if any provisions remained after the necessities of his men were satisfied, they should be returned.

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As reasonable an answer as this may appear to be to the reader, it did not content the Prince of Conaught; and with the true implacable spirit of an offended Irishman, rather than not take his revenge, he would take it at the expence of his own country, and though it should advantage the common enemy. The Momonian army therefore being too powerful for him to meddle with, he privately sent intelligence to the Danes, that it was upon the march towards them, and at all events determined to free their King and DUNCHAN from their imprisonment. As soon as SITRICK had received this information, who was waiting at Ardmagh, where the prisoners were, for KENNEDY's answer to his proposals, he ordered the Danish Earls who had the care of their imprisonments to march out of the city with all their troops, and give the Momonians battle; whilst he with his guards might safely and unperceived remove the prisoners aboard the fleet at Dundalk.

Whether SITRICK thought only to make a diversion for this purpose, by ordering his forces to give battle to the Irish army so much superior to them in number, and that they might make good their retreat without any considerable loss, or whether he intended to remove the prisoners at all events, even to the sacrificing his army that was detached to cause this diversion, as soon as DONOUGH was informed in the beginning of the action with them, by some whom he had made prisoners, that the King and DUNCHAN were carried away to Dundalk, being enraged at the disappointment, he ordered no quarter to be given, and scarce a Dane outlived to tell the defeat. On the next morning early he marched the army to Dundalk, in hopes to surprize the Danish General, and recover the liberty of his prisoners. But the few Danes who had escaped the slaughter having fled thither, and informed SITRICK of the great strength of the Munster army, he found it would be impossible for him to oppose them; and that there was no other way left to secure his prisoners, or to provide for his own safety and that of his men, but by getting them all, as fast as possible, on board his ships which lay in the bay.

The embarkation was scarce effected, when the army of Munster reached Dundalk; where they hoped to inclose the Danes as in a net, and either
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make them prisoners of war, or put them all to the sword: but they had no sooner entered the place under this expectation, than they found themselves again disappointed, their King carried aboard, and the enemy out of their reach. Whilst they were crouding along the shore, lamenting this misfortune, and meditating a way to redress it, they saw a large fleet under a brisk gale of wind steering directly towards the Danish ships, which they soon perceived to be the fleet from Munster. In the same proportion in which they were elated with this discovery, the Danes were surpris'd and terrified. For when once they were embarked, they thought themselves as much out of the reach of the Irish, as though they had been landed in their own country. But instead of this safety, they found themselves on a sudden in the utmost peril. There was no possibility of escaping the Irish fleet, which would be almost along-side of them before they could weigh anchor and get under sail; and if they attempted to disembark, they were sure to be cut to pieces by the Irish army. There was therefore no security for them in this situation, but in their valour and dexterity; and in these they must confide.

The Irish admiral, if he may be called so, perceiving the Danes in the utmost hurry and confusion at his approach, made all the haste he could to begin the attack; consistently with that order and disposition of his ships, on which the success of naval engagements in a great measure depends. If the Danes were under a manifest disadvantage in having scarce time enough to form into a line of battle, yet they were much superior in the number of men, having all the guards, and the remainder of their land forces on board; which, in ships without ordnance, make the principal part of their strength. The Irish commander, like a brave man, sought out the ship of the Danish general, and after attacking it with great impetuosity, boarded it sword in hand. He had been scarce a moment on board, before he saw CEALLACHAN bound to the mast. Nothing but the sight of his King in that position, whose liberty was the great object of the expedition which he had the command of, could add to the fire of his valour on that occasion: but this sight set his valour in a blaze of fury; and regardless of prudence, safety, or any other consideration, he made his way to him through blood and slaughter. As soon as he

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had cut the cords with his sword, which had fastened him to the mast, he advised him instantly to repair on board the Irish ship he had quitted, and leave him to fight it out with the General of the Danes. There was no time for consultation, and CEALLACHAN took his advice : but though nothing could exceed the spirit and activity of the Irish Admiral, who seemed something more than man, and who dealt death and destruction round him, yet he was not immortal. Surrounded at last by the Danish guards, and too few of his own seamen having boarded the ship with him to clear the deck, he was over-powered by numbers, and fell covered with blood and wounds.

The Danish General, being convinced, that upon the loss of his own ship would in all probability follow the loss of all his fleet, exerted his skill and valour in order to save it : and that he might strike a terror and dismay into the Irish, he caused the head of FAILBHE their Admiral to be cut off and exposed to view. FINGALL, the Admiral's second, being thus informed of his fate, resolved to revenge his death ; and calling to his men to follow him, they boarded the Dane with an irresistible fury. The contest was hot and bloody ; but there being so many fresh men to supply the place of the slaughtered or disabled Danes, the Irish had no prospect of obtaining the victory. As unable however as FINGALL was to possess himself of the Danish ship, he was too valiant an Irishman to think of retreating to his own ; especially without the destruction of SITRICK, in revenge of the death of FAILBHE. He took a resolution therefore in this dilemma, which is not perhaps to be paralleled in any history. Making his way up to SITRICK, with his sword, against all that opposed him, he grasped him close in his arms and threw himself with him into the sea ; where they both perished together. Two other Irish Captains, being fired with the glory of this action of FINGALL's, and being intent on securing the victory to their countrymen, made their way through the enemy with redoubled fury, and boarding the ship in which were TOR and MAGNUS, the surviving brothers of SITRICK, and then the chief commanders of the Danes, rushed violently upon them, caught them up in their arms, after the example of FINGALL, and jumping overboard with them, were all lost together.

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The Danes being equally astonished and dismayed at these desperate exploits of the Irish, having lost their General and his brothers as well as vast numbers of other officers and men, and the royal prisoners being released, began to lose much of their courage and to think all opposition in vain. The Irish perceiving the enemy dispirited and giving way, pursued their success with so much the more ardour; and boarding most of the Danish fleet, a horrible slaughter ensued. Nor did the Momonians obtain this victory—the first engagement at sea which the Irish ever attempted—without prodigious loss. The Danes, besides their numbers, had greatly the superiority in point of skill in naval encounters; and they not only fought for their present safety, but for their future peace and establishment in the island. On the other side the Irish contended not only for victory, but to redeem their King and country out of the hands of these treacherous and cruel enemies. This was therefore the most obstinate and bloody battle that had been known between them for many years. The army which stood on the shore in sight of the whole engagement were like men distracted, because they were so near and yet could give no assistance to their countrymen; who were over-matched in skill and numbers, and who for a great while had no prospect of obtaining the victory: at last however it was completed, though very dearly bought, and a few only of the lightest galleys of the Danes escaped to sea.

The reader will easily figure to himself the acclamations of the army, and the expressions of mutual joy, when the Irish fleet approached the shore after a victory so extraordinary. Nor was CEALLACHAN himself less delighted with his deliverance from a constant apprehension of death or slavery, through the savage and tyrannical temper of SITRICK; with whom neither humanity nor the laws of Nations had any weight. The King therefore ordered the most grateful acknowledgments to be made to all his forces by sea and land for their fidelity and affection, and especially to the former, by whose invincible courage he was enabled to regain his freedom. Having given instructions for the care of the wounded and the prisoners, and having provided sufficiently for his fleet, he put himself once more at the head of his army, in order to return to the government of his province.

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The King of Leinster, a man of a mean and servile disposition, envious of the glory which the Momonians had acquired, though over the enemies of his country, prepared to obstruct his passage through his dominions, and to harass him in his march. To this purpose he collected all the forces he could at so short a warning, intending to place them in different ambuscades—for he was neither generous nor strong enough to attack them openly—that they might fall upon the army of CEALLACHAN, when they expected no opposition and were prepared for no defence. But with what secrecy soever he might form this base and treacherous plan against his countrymen, he could not carry it into execution without its being known in part to the King of Munster. The gathering his troops together at that time, without any apparent motive, was enough to cause an alarm; and there must be those about him, who had so much love for their native country, as to detest and betray such an apostate from it. It is certain however that CEALLACHAN by some means or other had timely notice of this design; and being outrageously incensed at so much unnatural and unprovoked perfidy, he proclaimed it to his whole army; ordering no quarter to be given to the men of Leinster who engaged in such a cause, but to hunt them down as robbers and beasts of prey. This is one, amongst many, of the diabolical effects of war; that innocent men, forced upon a service which they perhaps abhor, must be sacrificed to the pride, ambition, or malice of their masters. But these severe injunctions of CEALLACHAN being carried by some deserters to the King of Leinster—and probably by connivance, if not by order—he stood in so much fear of the resentment of the Momonians, who were flushed with victory, and who were then prepared to receive him, that he desisted from his enterprize; and dismissing his forces left the army of Munster to prosecute their march without any molestation.

The joy of that province at the return of their King from his captivity, who was justly beloved for his many eminent virtues, may easily be conceived without any assistance from the historian. When he had settled himself in his government, and had thoroughly refreshed and recruited his forces, reflecting on the oppression and the treachery of the Danes from which he had just had a very narrow escape, he resolved to collect the whole strength
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of his province, to fall upon them in every quarter, and if possible to expell them all out of his kingdom. To this purpose he began with those that inhabited in and about Limerick, and without much opposition obtained a complete victory; slaughtering five hundred, and making prisoners of all the rest. From hence he marched his army to the country of Cashell, where was a great deal of plunder defended by five hundred Danes: the former he took, and the latter he put to the sword. The Danish General having received intelligence of this defeat, gave him battle with an intention to recover the plunder: but the Momonians were too strong for him: a great part of his army was destroyed; and he himself with the remainder very difficultly escaped on board their ships and put to sea. Having thus cleared his country of these invaders and secured peace to his province, he made an alliance with the King of the Deisies, to whom he gave his sister in marriage; and in a short time after descended quietly to his grave, to the inexpressible disadvantage and grief of all his subjects.

In all probability the succession to the crown of Munster at the death of CEALLACHAN was much contested: for a conspiracy was formed by some of the near relations of the succeeding King, which in two years put an end to his life and reign together. MAHON, the son of KENNEDY abovementioned, was then called to the crown; who had one brother King of Thomond at that time, and another called BRIAN BOROMY, of whom the reader will see a great deal in the next book, who was then a General in the Munster army. As we hear no more of the father nor of the brother DUNCHAN who had been taken prisoner by the Danes with CEALLACHAN, it is natural to conclude that they were dead: and such omissions as these occur very frequently in the short historical accounts that are handed down of those distant times. However were such omissions as these the only ones, they would not be worth repining at; and may be easily supplied by every discerning reader. But omissions, of much greater moment to good history, occur in every page of the materials from which this ancient state of Ireland is compiled; and though this is to be lamented, it is not to be remedied.

The reign of DONOGH, Monarch of Ireland at this time, is a pregnant proof of the truth of what I have said: for though it continued five and
twenty

DONO. II. twenty years, yet we meet with nothing at all relating to him but what hath been already mentioned, of his conniving at SITRICK's treachery, and that he carried his army into the territories of Conaught—for what reason it is not said—where he suffered a defeat, and many of his troops were slain. The whole country indeed was harrassed by the Danes and Norwegians all through his reign: and though there must be other matter for history to be recorded, yet the writers of those times, it is said, and I suppose not untruly, were obliged to use the sword in the room of the pen; and instead of relating the transactions of their country, to employ themselves in its defence. In the intervals of peace however, it may be presumed that they returned to the business of their profession, and that all the public affairs of any moment were recollected and set down. But I have more than once accounted for the loss of these narrations in the destruction of their archives by their foreign enemies, and how it happens that there are extracts or abridgments of them in the fragments which have escaped.

In this reign, it has been observed, that the Danes and Norwegians were very troublesome to the Irish in many parts of the Island; and for want of harmony and union among the natives, their attempts in general proved successful; for they frequently procured those advantages by fraud which they could not obtain by force. Thus the King of Leinster and his children fell into their hands by treachery; whom they detained in captivity as long as they could, and treated them with great severity. These outrages at length awakened the King of Munster, to revenge the cause of his country upon the common enemy: and by the particulars which are recorded of the action, it seems to have been an engagement between the whole body of the Danes in the southern part of the island on one side, and the Momonians, headed by MAHON their King, and his brother BRIAN their renowned General, on the other. In this battle however the former met with a total overthrow, and with the loss of almost all their chief commanders. The governors of Waterford, Cork, and Limerick, were among the slain; the number of which amounted to two thousand in the field of battle: but as they were pursued in their retreat into the city of Limerick and chased from street to street, the slaughter became more considerable, and the victory more complete. The place was given up by the King of Munster, to be plundered

dered by his troops, as a reward for their zeal and courage ; and an immense booty of jewels, gold, and silver, and rich furniture, was found in it. When the houses were thoroughly rifled and the plunder carried off, the town was burnt down, the fortifications were dismantled, and the whole city and its suburbs rendered an heap of ruins. Soon after this victory, MAHON, though a Prince of great valour and conduct, who had an undoubted right to the crown of Munster, was for some reason or other, which is not mentioned, conspired against by his subjects, seized upon, and conducted under a strong guard as a prisoner to the territory of Oneachach, where he was barbarously put to death.

The great success of the Irish in the southern province had a good effect on their countrymen in the north ; who resolved to oppose the progress of the Danes in Ulster. To this end the provincial troops were all assembled, under the command of MORTOUGH, the son of NEIL their General : and the foreigners were attacked with so much vigour and resolution, and the action was conducted with so much military skill by the Irish general, that the Danes were routed, with a slaughter of eight hundred men, and their three chief commanders. These two defeats, considerable as they were, yet were rendered much more so in the consequences which they had throughout the kingdom. For the Danes, having lost their principal officers, and the greatest part of their forces, became dispirited : they were afraid lest the Irish, seeing so few of them remaining, should agree together at once, to fall upon them every where before they had procured a fresh supply from Norway, and so extirpate their whole race : and had the Irish not been doomed to be always sacrificed to their own intestine heats and animosities, the fate of the Danes at that time might have been such as they apprehended. This apprehension however induced them to cease from all hostility and oppression : and a spirit of freedom and tranquillity being diffused over the island instead of slavery and bloodshed, the natives enjoyed a state of commerce and prosperity, which they had been strangers to for many years.

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Dono. II.

But this lasted not long. The Danes received a reinforcement, which gave them new life, and encouraged them to return to their former occupations of violence and rapine. The Irish had so much experience of the treachery of these people, that in the intervals of peace they were obliged to be upon their guard, lest their security should prove their ruin; and it was well for them that they were so. Thus, at a celebrated fair of Rosforea, at this time, when the public tranquillity was undisturbed, a very formidable body of the Danish army made a stolen march, in order to surprise them, and to carry off all the goods and merchandise exhibited on that occasion. But the natives brought their arms to defend their property in case it should be attacked; and as soon as they received intelligence that the Danes were on their march against them, they left the fair by common consent with their goods abroad; and though they had neither skill nor opportunity to draw up in a regular order, yet they fell upon the enemy with so much resolution and unanimity, and the Danes were so much surprized in their turn with this attack, that a pannick took them at the first charge which they could not recover from, and four thousand were killed in the battle and in the pursuit. Such a victory as this, obtained by merchants and tradesmen met together at a public fair, without order, and without discipline, is a memorable instance of what great things may be effected by a body of men, under an unanimous resolution to conquer or to die.

The inhabitants of the province of Conaught being alarmed at this insidious conduct of the Danes, and roused by the bravery of their countrymen, determined to dispossess the foreigners of that province: in two attempts against them they succeeded to their wishes; but the Danes were so much enraged at these defeats, that they spread themselves over the country, rifling all the churches and religious houses that fell in their way, and plundering the unarmed inhabitants with great cruelty. This however did not abate the courage nor the resolution of the army of Conaught; on the contrary it whetted both; and they took an ample revenge for this last insult on the province, by slaughtering or expelling all the Danes that were concerned in it. But the Danes were not the only foreigners

reigners which the Irish had to encounter at that time. **RODERICK**, a Prince of Wales, a brave and experienced General, transported a great army of Welsh, in order to plunder the country, and if possible, to keep possession of it. The natives received him with their wonted valour, and the Prince losing his life in the first charge, the greatest part of his army shared his fate. About this time died **DONOGH**, the Monarch of Ireland, after a very inglorious, inactive reign of five and twenty years; if not in base alliance and confederacy with the Danes, at least not their enemy.

DONO. II.

CONGALL the son of **MELMITH**, of the Heremonian line, succeeded him on the throne; but not in his inactivity and want of love for his country. For no sooner did the Danes begin to raise disturbances in his reign, than he collected all his forces to chastize them; and in the memorable battle of Mune-Bregan, defeated them with the slaughter of seven thousand; the most bloody battle, if I remember right, in all their history hitherto. About this time the Danes of Ireland were converted to the Christian faith; and it is said, that they then built the Abbey of St. Mary's, near Dublin, for Monks of the Benedictine order: though others have supposed that it was founded long before.

CONG. II.
A. D. 944.

MAHON the King of Munster, being put to death in the manner above related, his brother **BRIAN BOROMY**, and the General of his army, mounted the throne. Among so many distinguished warriors of Irish birth, as we have already met with in this work, it is impossible perhaps to say whose spirit was the most magnanimous, whose courage was the most invincible, whose arm had the most strength, whose zeal was most active, whose military skill was greatest, and whose head was crowned with the highest glory. But if **BRIAN** did not excel in all these particulars, it is certain that he equalled the most illustrious in any one of them; and that he had greater success than all his predecessors.

When he had called his own subjects to account that had conspired against his brother, and put an end to the disorders in his province, he sent a herald to proclaim war against the King of Oneachach, whose subjects had put **MAHON** to death. The King made all the haste he could to

CONC. II.

provide for his defence; and thinking his own army not sufficient to make head against the Momonians, he took fifteen hundred Danes into his pay, upon whom he had great dependance. The King of Munster marched at the head of his provincial troops, and had the illustrious tribe of Dalgais in the rear; and though when the battle was joined, it was fought with great valour, yet the Momonians soon broke through the opposite army, and a terrible carnage ensued. The Danes endeavoured to save themselves by flight; but the greatest part of them were killed in the pursuit, or taken prisoners; and this success drew the envy and ill-will of the King of the Daifies upon BRIAN.

Whether he had any alliance with the defeated Prince that stirred him up thus to revenge his cause, the history does not inform us: and though it is said, that he was so unnatural as to resolve to take vengeance on the King of Munster for the slaughter of the Danes in this battle, yet it seems incredible that this should have been his only motive, or indeed the principal motive for making war upon him. For though we have had many instances in our own time and country, of very extravagant lengths which men have gone in favour of its public enemies, yet the case before us is widely different: nor does the taking in the Danes by the Irish Princes, as auxiliaries, in their battles with one another, bear any proportion to the crime of taking satisfaction of the King of Munster, for the overthrow which he had given the Danes. We must therefore conclude, I think, that either the King of the Daifies had some alliance or connection with the King of Oneachach, or that he had some animosity against BRIAN, for other reasons than his success against the Danes: and if we should say that envy at his growing fame, which began at that time to surpass the fame of all his contemporaries, had some share in inclining him to make war upon BRIAN, it is an assertion which may be justified from human nature.

But whatever were the motives of DONALD, King of the Daifies, having raised a numerous and well disciplined army amongst his own people, and taken a formidable body of Danes into his pay, he invaded the territories of the King of Munster; and with the fury of an enraged and
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bitter enemy, spread terror and desolation among the inhabitants. As soon as BRIAN received intelligence of these hostilities, and could get his troops together, he led them directly up to the enemy, whom he found plundering the country in a very merciless manner. It was impossible for the Danes to withstand the valour and impetuosity with which they were attacked by the army of BRIAN; and after a vigorous but short resistance, they were entirely routed. The King of the Dairies seeing his subsidies thus severely handled, and his own forces slaughtering or giving way on every side, fought his own safety as well as theirs by flight. The pursuit was hot and bloody; and as this was merely a war of defence and unprovoked, the Momonians had their just resentments to gratify, as well as to maintain their renown in arms. The defeat therefore of the enemy, and the slaughter of the greatest part of them, did not content the King of Munster and his army; but continuing the pursuit to the town of Waterford, and entering the place with them, they put all the rest to the sword; and DONALD King of the Dairies, was deservedly among the slain. The city, which was then inhabited by the Danes, was sacked and plundered by the conquerors; and after the booty was sent away, it was set on fire in many places, and consumed to ashes.

This great hero BRIAN, having thus recovered the tranquillity of his province, and by the glory of his successes having established his fame over the island, obliged the southern half of it, called Leath Modha and so often mentioned, to profess allegiance to him and pay him a tribute. But the Irish and Danes in the province of Leinster soon revolted, disowned his authority, and refused the tribute; and BRIAN found it necessary to chastize them for their disobedience by force of arms. Therefore putting himself at the head of his veteran troops whom he had made invincible, he marched to Leinster; and the army of that province, consisting of Danes and Irish, offered them battle. No courage, nor even fury, were wanting on either side; but the Momonians by their experience and superior skill, or by the good genius of their King, in a short time broke the ranks of their enemies, and overthrew them with a terrible slaughter; leaving five thousand dead in the field of battle. The Danes which survived the action were pursued as far as Dublin; in which pursuit a great many more were slain, and hostages were delivered up for the fidelity of those who were spared from the sword.

CONG. II. BRIAN then levied his tribute, which was sent with him to Kincora in the county of Clare, where he kept his court; and his victorious troops went into quarters of refreshment.

The only notice, except what has been mentioned, which is handed down of the Monarch CONGALL through a reign of twelve years, is a rupture which he had with the King of Munster soon after this battle—upon what grounds it is not said—invading his province in a hostile manner, and putting two of his brothers to the sword. All the other particulars of this expedition, and the manner in which it ended and was revenged by BRIAN, must be left to our own conjecture; for there is no account. It is easy enough to imagine however from the warlike and heroic character of this Prince, that he revenged this indignity from the Monarch of Ireland, and revenged it very severely. The remainder of this reign is taken up with accounts of the great successes of the Danes under the command of GODFREY a son of SITRICK; of their confederacy with the Irish in the province of Leinster; of their plundering the churches and religious houses; and of their carrying away three thousand prisoners, besides gold and silver and other booty to an immense value. The Monarch having marched his army to Ardmagh in order to put a stop to these depredations, was there set upon by the Danes, and their unnatural allies the troops of Leinster, where they were defeated, and slain.

DON. IV.
A. D. 956. On the death of CONGALL, the throne of Ireland was filled by DONALD O NEILL of the Heremonian line, who may be called DONALD the fourth; and he sat upon the throne four and twenty years. His reign however was a time of great distraction, through the frequent hostilities of the Danes, and the opposition given to them by the Irish. The Monarch himself, upon some provocation or other, which is omitted, invaded the province of Conaught, whose King had not an army sufficient to make head against him; and DONALD carried off a very valuable booty, and a great number of prisoners. On one side the Danes who inhabited Dublin, made incursions into the county of Kildare, which they plundered, under the command of AMELANUS their General: and on the other side the Momonians under BRIAN their King, assaulted the Danes who inhabited Limerick, and set it

it on fire about their ears. The King of Ulster being provoked with the Lagenians, for the assistance they had given to the common enemy, and entering into a confederacy with them against their country, raised a formidable army among his subjects, marched with it into Leinster, and plundered all the province from the barrow eastward to the sea. Here he encamped for two months, and withstood the united efforts of the Danes and Lagenians to dislodge him and make him retire.

DON. IV.

Notwithstanding the frequent perils and discomfitures which the natives brought upon their foreign enemies, yet for want of that harmony which is one great strength of a nation, and being accursed with intestine feuds and animosities, the Danes still continued their ravages in many parts of the kingdom. This induced the Monarch at length to fall upon those who inhabited the city of Dublin; and their associates the Lagenians; and a desperate and bloody battle ensued. The slaughter was so great on both sides, and especially among the chiefs, that the victory is given to neither. About the same time, the patriot and the hero BRIAN BOROMY engaged the Danes of Inis-cathy, killed eight hundred upon the spot, and routed all the rest. But KINOTH the primate, so far forgot his country, his religion, and himself, as to assist the foreigners who lived at Dublin against the Irish: for the people of Leinster being weary of the vassalage in which they were held, and taking advantage of the great slaughter which was made of the Danes in the last action between them and the Monarch, in which they lost their three Generals first in command, refused any longer to be their auxiliaries. The Danes, being accustomed to so much submission from them, were irritated at this refusal, and with the assistance of the primate made war upon the provincial troops; in which the Prince of Leinster lost his life.

It is impossible to say what provocations might have tempted the primate to act a part which was so unnatural and so much out of character; and though there might be something, if we knew the whole, which might alleviate his guilt a little, yet no provocations whatever could justify a prelate, a man of a peaceful holy function, in assisting foreigners, if not Pagans, to make war upon his countrymen, and to bring them under their yoke. But if here is the instance of a Bishop turning his crozier into a sword, in
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DON. IV. favour of those too whom he was bound by every tie to oppose, we have at the same time another instance of a King quitting his throne, leaving his subjects in a time of peril whom he was bound to defend against their enemies, taking the habit of a religious, and shutting himself up in a cell. For immediately after this last victory of the Danes, DONALD the Monarch abdicated the throne, went to the convent at Ardmagh, and ended his days as a Monk. What a reverse of character in two men of the greatest rank in the kingdom ; and what a proof of the deceitfulness of the human heart ! The King of Munster, as though he was born to be the scourge of the Danes, revenged this last defeat of his countrymen, by giving battle to the foreigners at Inis-cathy ; taking their three Generals prisoners, and killing eight hundred men.

MALA. II.
A. D. 980.

On DONALD's quitting the throne, MALACHY the second was elected Monarch of Ireland : and though WARE calls him his son, yet I can find no authority among the Irish writers for this assertion. On the contrary we are told by KEATING, that he was the son of the Monarch FLAN, which seems likewise to have been a mistake ; for he had been dead above threescore years at that time : indeed LYNCH and “ the book of reigns ” have called him the son of DONALD, but this is explained by O FLAHERTY, who says that MALACHY was the son of another DONALD, the son of DONOUGH the Monarch, and therefore the grandson of FLAN ; which accounts for the mistakes of both the authors abovementioned. It is certain however that he was a Prince of the Heremonian house ; and in the first years of his monarchy he approved himself worthy of his descent, by opposing the freebooters with great valour and activity. The battle of Tara which he fought against the Danes of Dublin, and the sons of HUMPHRY one of the Generals whom BRIAN had taken prisoner, in which five thousand of them were slain, makes a principal figure in the annals of his reign. Indeed this action, and the siege of Dublin which soon after followed it, with a small rencounter, are the only instances which he gave of an active zeal against the enemies of his country, during a reign of three and twenty years. It is true that though he gave no more disturbance to the foreigners, yet he was not yet so much addicted to ease and indolence, but that he could indulge a spirit of animosity against his countrymen, and carry hostilities into Munster for the sake of

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some quarrel which he had with the Dalgais: he took an opportunity, whilst the King was assisting the province of Conaught with his army against the Danes, to make this incursion: but as soon as BRIAN was informed of it, he marched back with all speed to the rescue of his country, which MALACHY quitted on his approach: and this animosity was remembered by BRIAN, when he who indulged it thought it had been forgotten. MALA. II.

I have mentioned the siege of Dublin, undertaken by this Monarch; and I must now return to it. Encouraged by his success at the battle of Tara, and being not yet corrupted with the ease and luxury of a court, he made an alliance with the King of Ulster, by which they agreed to join their forces and attack the city of Dublin; the place of refuge for the Danes, to which they retired upon a defeat, 'till they were reinforced from Norway with a fresh supply. In consequence of this treaty, all the necessary preparations for a siege were made; and the allied army, which was numerous and well disciplined, sat down before the walls. Without cannon, bombs, or mortar, or any other implements which modern times have invented for the diabolical destruction of mankind, the siege of a city fortified must depend a great deal more on courage and activity than on skill and perseverance: and accordingly when the allies had been three days entrenched, a general assault was made; and in proportion to the violence of the storm was the slaughter on both sides that ensued. The fury of the Irish at length prevailed; their standard was fixed upon the ramparts, and the Danes yielding the place, the Irish entered it sword in hand. But the violence usual on such occasions was restrained: the conquerors were contented with their victory, and the plunder which it afforded, without putting the wretched inhabitants to the sword. All the Irish prisoners, among whom was the King of Leinster and his children, and several hostages of the first rank, who had suffered a long and severe confinement, were set at liberty; and the principal Danish officers took their places. In short their affairs by this conquest were reduced to great extremities, and they were obliged to submit to whatever conditions the Monarch of Ireland thought fit to impose. These conditions, no doubt, were thought hard by the Danes, and were accepted probably with

MALA. II. with a resolution to be broke on their part as soon as it was in their power; for they broke them very soon. Their business then was to save their lives and their possession of the city of Dublin, which must be done at all events; and as to any terms of peace which the Irish might insist upon for these grants, they were willing enough to accept them, as intending to trust to time and accident to relieve themselves from them. The conditions imposed by MALACHY upon the Danes, were to quit all their conquests from the Shannon to the Sea eastwards; to refrain from all hostilities and incursions, under the penalty of being cut to pieces without quarter; and to submit to the payment of a large tribute.

But let us see the issue of this peace concluded with the Danes at Dublin. As soon as they had recovered themselves by supplies from abroad of every kind, and had thought themselves upon an equal footing of strength with the Irish, they returned to their former attempts against them, and to regain their settlements in the same manner as they did when no such treaty was in being. This brought on a rencounter between them and the Monarch mentioned above, in which MALACHY defeated two of their champions whom he encountered successively hand to hand; taking a collar of gold from the neck of the former, and carrying off the sword of the other, as trophies of his victory. But the Danes had received such reinforcements, and were so incensed at the hard conditions which the Irish had imposed, that they exerted themselves with redoubled fury; and the natives were in danger of being again reduced to a state of slavery. For the Monarch was by this time so given up to a life of pleasure, that the happiness of his country was sacrificed to his love of ease and his diversions: and the provincial Kings, except BRIAN, were become so indifferent about the public welfare, that if they were unmolested themselves they were content; imagining that the Irish government would last their time, and leaving posterity to take care of itself.

These however were not the selfish, unworthy, and dastardly sentiments of the King of Munster. He was continually at the head of his brave Momonians, chasing and harrassing the enemies of his country from
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one end of the island to another: and his zeal and success, which humbled their insolence, and made them glad to be quiet in their settlements, acquired him so much esteem and popularity among the natives, that they began to form a design of deposing their inactive and inglorious Monarch, and conferring the sovereignty upon BRIAN, though of the Heberian line, because they owed their lives and liberties to his protection. If the people in general were in this disposition towards the King of Munster, we may be sure that his own subjects, who had great cause to love him, and had his honour much at heart, would do all that was in their power to improve it. They saw a fair opportunity of advancing their Prince to the Monarchy of the kingdom; and they were glad to have it in their power to shew their gratitude for his excellent administration. But as it might seem to be rather an effect of their partiality than of the King's merit, if the people of his own province should stand alone in this design of leading him to the throne, they represented to the nobility and the gentry of Conaught, the distressed miserable state of their country under the government of MALACHY, and how much more miserable it would have been through the ravages of the Danes, if BRIAN BOROMY their King, had not singly with his Momonians repelled their insults: they desired therefore that the chiefs of Conaught would join with them in a resolution to depose the Monarch, and to set the King of Munster on the throne.

This proposal being agreed to, the chiefs of the two provinces met in council to deliberate on the measures they should pursue. The deposal of a Monarch any otherwise than in battle, or by assassination, and once by banishment, was a thing unknown in Ireland; and it required some consideration to effect it quietly and with success. At last it was determined to send ambassadors to MALACHY to desire him civilly to abdicate the throne, and if he refused, to compel him to it. Ambassadors of the first rank were accordingly sent; who signified to him, in pursuance of this resolution of the council, that as he neglected the protection of his subjects; and looked tamely on their oppression by the Danes, as an unconcerned spectator, he was unworthy of the monarchy; that a King of Ireland, who had the happiness of his country at heart, would never

MALA. II. suffer the ravages of these merciless enemies to pass unrevenged, as he did; that BRIAN BOROMY, the renowned King of Munster, had alone undertaken the cause of Irish liberty; and therefore that he alone deserved to wear the crown of Ireland, who knew so well how to defend it, with honour to himself, and with happiness to his people. In short, the ambassadors informed MALACHY, that the chiefs of the two provinces whom they represented, were determined to dethrone him; and in order to prevent disturbances, they wished he would retire quietly to a private life, and give no further trouble.

As much addicted to indolence and pleasure as the Monarch had been for several years past, which in the situation his country was then in, was an unpardonable indulgence, yet he was naturally, as we have seen, of a warlike spirit, till it had been enervated with ease and luxury: and it is not therefore to be wondered at, that he should receive such an embassy with indignation; that he should refuse to deliver up a crown at such a request; and that he should be determined to defend his right to the last extremity. The King of Munster had not hitherto appeared to have any hand in dethroning MALACHY; and seems to have waited in expectation, that his Momonians would have been able to set the crown of Ireland upon his head. Had this design been effected, it would not only have lessened the envy, and perhaps prevented the opposition, of other competitors for the monarchy, but it would also have abated the odium of BRIAN's usurpation, who was of the Heberian line, and consequently of his breaking through the constitution which had been preserved inviolate for many ages.

But when the King of Munster perceived, at the return of the ambassadors, that nothing was to be hoped for from MALACHY without force, he laid aside all reserve; and resolved to make use of the popularity he had acquired among the natives, to depose the Monarch and to seize upon the crown. For this purpose he raised a formidable army, not only of his own province, but in other parts of the southern half of the kingdom, of which he claimed the government; and even took those Danes into his pay whom he had subdued, and who had promised homage
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and subjection to him. When all these forces were assembled, he put himself at the head of his veteran Dalgais, and marched directly to Tara. But before he began any hostilities, he sent a herald to MALACHY, to demand his resignation of the monarchy; to bring hostages of the first quality for the security of his obedience; and, in case of refusal, to declare war against him.

MALA. II.

The King of Ireland could not be ignorant of the vast preparations made by BRIAN; but whether he did not suspect that they were made against himself, or that he was deceived with false intelligence, he made no attempts to oppose him. The Monarch's answer therefore was, that as his army was separated, he was in no condition at present to give him battle: but if the King of Munster would suspend his hostilities for a month, that MALACHY might be enabled to collect his forces, he would accept the challenge; or if his subjects refused to support him with their assistance, he would send hostages to BRIAN, at the expiration of that term, for his resignation of the crown, and for his own obedience to BRIAN as the lawful Monarch. In the mean time he requested it as a favour, that the country of Meath might not be plundered, and that the Momonians might continue quiet in their camp at Tara. The King of Munster was too generous an enemy, and too much of a hero, not to accept of these conditions; and his obedient army, though they longed for action, were restrained without difficulty from raising contributions upon the country.

The Monarch having gained so much time from BRIAN, dispatched messengers to the petty Princes and the nobility of Leath Con, or the northern half of the kingdom, to demand their assistance and advice upon this great occasion: he sent his antiquary particularly to the famous HUGH O NEILL a Prince of the north Hy-Nialls and chief of the territory of Tyrone of the Heremonian house, to require his proportion of troops to succour him in a battle on which his crown depended; and in case of refusal, to insist on his sending some hostages which MALACHY might deliver up to BRIAN as a security for his own obedience; because these were the conditions he had been obliged to submit to. The same message was sent to the Kings of Ulster, and Conaught: and if they were unwilling to support him against the army

MALA. II. of Munster, the messengers had orders to declare, that his resignation of the crown would be no dishonour to him, but to them who denied him assistance, and whose ancestors had filled the throne of Ireland for many ages.

Notwithstanding the distress which was signified by this message, the petty Princes of the northern division refused to obey the summons of MALACHY; and the Kings of Ulster and Conaught did little better. O NEILL sent him word, that when the royal palace of Tara was possessed by his great ancestors, they knew how to defend it against all attempts: and if MALACHY was unable to keep possession of it, he had nothing to do but to deliver it up: that he had fate unconcerned and seen the blood of the natives daily spilt; their wives and children starving in the woods; their cities, lands, and harbours in the possession of foreigners; their churches monasteries and chapels laid in ashes; and that whilst he remained thus inactive, the King of Munster, like a patriot Prince, had reduced the common enemy, restored the liberty of the subject, and employed his time and his abilities for the public good. It was therefore no wonder that the affections of the people should be alienated from MALACHY and transferred to BRIAN; and if this was not the case, added O NEILL, he should not oppose the Momonians and especially the tribe of the Dalgais, whose virtues he respected, and whose friendship he desired.

When the messenger returned to the Monarch with this answer, MALACHY was so struck with the consequences that might follow from O NEILL's neutrality or revolt, that he determined, if possible, to get him over. To this purpose he made a visit to O NEILL; and as an argument which he thought would be irresistible, he offered to resign to him his right to Tara and its demesnes, which had always been appendant to the crown of Ireland, and to secure his posterity in the possession of it; if O NEILL would assist him with all his power, and oblige BRIAN to desist from his intended purpose. Whether it was in the Monarch's power to dismember so valuable an estate and the ancient palace from the crown for any longer time than he held the sovereignty of the island, and whether any succeeding Monarch would have
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thought himself bound by this agreement may be justly doubted, if not MALA. II. denied.

O NEILL however required time to consider of this proposal, and to take the deliberation of his chiefs upon a matter of such importance to his family and the publick. When he had acquainted them with the motives of MALACHY's journey, and the advantageous offers which he made for an assistance against BRIAN, the chiefs suspecting the integrity of the Monarch, and that if he had it in his power to make good his proposal, that he would not have it in his will, advised O NEILL to return him a civil answer, but to refuse intermeddling in his quarrell with BRIAN which might prove of pernicious consequence. But however upon second thoughts, they imagined they might be able to draw some advantages to themselves from this distress of the Monarch; and therefore they proposed, that if he would deliver up one half of the country of Meath to them and their posterity, as well as the lands of Tara to O NEILL and his heirs, in consideration of the dangers they must expose themselves to, in engaging in his defence against the Momonian army, they would immediately array themselves in order of battle.

These conditions were accordingly offered by O NEILL to the King of Ireland; who thinking them too exorbitant and severe, rejected them with indignation, and returned home to his court. However being irresolute and not knowing what to do, he summoned the nobility of the tribe of Colman, who were under his immediate jurisdiction as King of Meath, and informing them of the present state of his affairs, and of the insolent demands of O NEILL and his chiefs, requested their advice as to the part he ought to take, and that they would not forsake him in this extremity. The reader need not be told, that there is a wide difference between loyalty and affection; between living quietly and not rebelling against a Prince, and arming and fighting in his defence. Thus though the tribe of Colman retained their loyalty to MALACHY as their lawful sovereign, yet they had lost all affection for him: though they would not join with BRIAN who was a pretender to the crown, yet they would not fight for MALACHY who had permitted the enemies of their country to oppress and enslave them
without

MALA. II.

without disturbance. In this disposition of mind, which was a very natural one, their advice to the Monarch was, that since he could not be enabled to decide the dispute by force of arms, he should immediately repair to the camp at Tara, make his submission to the King of Munster, and get the best terms he could for the rest of his life.

Mortifying as this advice must needs be to a Monarch, yet MALACHY found himself under a necessity of complying with it; and taking with him a guard of twelve hundred horse, he went to the camp of BRIAN, where he was received with all the honour due to his rank. Here he related with indignation the treatment which he had met with from HUGH O NEILL and his chiefs: and though, being thus abandoned by his allies, he was obliged to resign his crown and dignity, yet he honestly owned to the King of Munster, that it was absolute necessity and not any want of courage or resolution, that had drawn him to this submission. It is said by KEATING, that BRIAN being touched with his misfortunes and with this ingenuous declaration, gave him another year to try his friends, and returned with his army to Munster. But this, which has not the air of probability, is contradicted, says MAC CURTIN, by the chief antiquary of Ireland who wrote the life of BRIAN; and who tells us, that he was then proclaimed and crowned at Tara, by the unanimous voice of all the Princes and clergy of the southern division of Ireland, and with the consent of MALACHY. After this he assigned the deposed Monarch his old inheritance as King of Meath; made him a present of two hundred and forty horses, besides gold and silver to his retinue; and the next year he went to Athlone and received hostages and submission from the Kings and Princes of Conaught and Ulster; who if they were not pleased with the expulsion of MALACHY, and the interruption of the succession, yet acquiesced in them cheerfully without complaining.

BRIAN.

In this manner was MALACHY the second deposed from the throne of Ireland, after a quiet possession of three and twenty years, without any bloodshed, or even the least commotion. Such revolutions are seen sometimes in other countries; they have been seen in this in which I write: but in
Ireland

Ireland, where the Monarchy was elective, where the contests for the crown were extremely violent, and where shedding each other's blood was almost as natural to them as the air they breathed, such a revolution was new and almost miraculous. Had MALACHY continued the same active zeal in the service of his country, which distinguished the former part of his reign, he would never have been deposed: and had BRIAN BOROMY led an indolent inglorious life of pleasure, when the common enemy was depopulating and laying waste his country, he would not have been pushed up into the monarchy. This is a lesson to Kings, that their security does not always depend on title and possession; and that their own happiness is most promoted by the happiness of their people. It is a lesson also to Princes who may be allied to crowns, that wasting their youth in ease and luxury and dissipation, when their country is involved in war, is mean and dishonourable: and on the other hand, that a martial spirit, heroic valour, and activity in the service of their country, will sometimes lead them to a throne without a legal title.

The renowned BRIAN BOROMY having acquired the submission of all the Princes in the island, and being universally acknowledged by all ranks of men as King of Ireland, a new scene of history will now present itself; which I shall reserve to be the subject of the following book. I wish it was in my power to conclude this, with any tolerable account of the affairs of Religion and the Church in Ireland, during the tenth century; but no such accounts have been preserved. The only information of this sort that I am able to give the reader—and I give it not from any thing that has been published, but from authentic manuscripts communicated by a friend—is, that the Hy-Niall Princes gave abundant testimonies of their pious zeal, by their princely endowments of monastic Colleges, the repositories of all the learning then in the world. Their zeal might in many cases be tinged with superstition, yet still it was a pious zeal, as it flowed from a good principle, and had no impure mixtures of persecution. Their moderation was visible in the foolish schism about the Catholic Easter and the Tonsure, which was agitated with so much violence in England and other countries: and though these Irish

Monarchs rejected for some time the synodal decrees of Rome in their own case, yet those who had a mind to receive them were left at liberty. Thus those decrees were received in the province of Munster, without the smallest interposition of the royal authority : and to say the truth, such a conduct of charitableness and moderation, when it does not proceed from indifference in religion, deserves much more the appellation of piety, than the zeal of Princes in later times, who gave no higher testimonies of their piety, than by inflicting bodily tortures for the punishment of supposed spiritual crimes. Such was the piety, among others, of our ELIZABETH ; who is so unjustly celebrated above what she deserves.

From this state of things it may be concluded, I think, not untruly, that in those old times which we call barbarous, the Irish Princes had more good sense and knowledge in cases the most important to mankind, than more modern Monarchs in nations of greater light. But be this as it might : if we frame our idea of the Hy-Niall Princes from what we see of Monarchs in our own time, we shall be deceived extremely. A modern King has very little to do : he delegates his power, and often his whole authority, to others : screened from public inspection, his person, if not his conduct, is secured from the contempt, to which personal weakness and personal vices are exposed. But a Monarch of Ireland had almost every thing to do : attended with little pomp to dazzle the vulgar and throw him at a great distance, assisted and covered with no ministers, he owed almost all his power and authority to his own virtues and abilities. These indeed were chiefly of the popular kind ; and it must be owned that what recommended and set off the hero, did but too often disgrace the man. Upon the whole perhaps, it is better for mankind, that the servility, the adulation, and the refined treachery of modern courts should prevail, than the fierce sincerity, the forward independancy, and open license of former times.

The catalogue of the eminent writers of Ireland, in the ninth and tenth centuries is a very short one ; and it would be shorter still if we were

to confine it to those who lived there. The continual wars with the Danes through so many years, rendered Ireland unfavourable to learning, and learned men, and amongst many others who were driven abroad, to seek that repose which is so necessary for study, and which was not to be enjoyed in their native country, ALBIN and CLEMENT went to France; where their learning and abilities procured them the favour of CHARLES the Great. Some of ALBIN's Epistles, WARE says, are extant, and certain rhetorical rules. CLEMENT his colleague wrote some grammatical pieces; and among his works are reckoned a Summary, and a book on the agreement of the Evangelists. The French, says LUPOLDUS BEBENBURGIUS, may compare with the Romans and Athenians by means of CLEMENT an Irishman. The reader will see from this account, that if England owed its best instructions in Christianity and its purest zeal, to the Irish, as it hath been shewn above, the Irish may also claim the honour of introducing learning into France.

CLAUDE, another pious and learned Irishman, who lived in the beginning of the ninth century, and whom the wars had driven abroad, wrote a commentary on S. MATTHEW, on the Epistles of S. PAUL, on the Pentateuch, the books of JOSHUA, Judges, and the Psalms; besides historical Memoirs, Homilies, a Summary, and a book on the agreement of the Evangelists. JOHN ERIGENA, a native of Ireland, a man of a searching wit, and great eloquence, says WARE, applied himself to letters in his own country from his infancy, and in his youthful days travelled into France, and was for some time at the court of CHARLES the Bald. About the end of the ninth century, he came into England at the request of King ALFRED; who employed him some years in the restoration of learning in the University at Oxford. He then retired to Malmesbury Abbey, where he died of some wounds he had received from his scholars, and was by some esteemed a martyr. This account, however, though copied from the English writers, is much contested by HARRIS, who thinks that they have blended what relates to three distinct persons of the name of JOHN in that century, and applied it all to Erigena. Be this as it might; he translated and wrote several books in different lan-

guages, such as Greek and Latin, Arabick and Chaldee; and **HONORIUS** calls him “another **CHRYSOSTOM**, a famous scripturist, who wrote in a very elegant stile of the nature of all things.”

The famous **CORMAC MACCUILLENAN**, who wrote the Psalter of Cashall, has been already mentioned as King of Munster, and a celebrated poet: and besides him, there is no other writer recorded in the tenth century,—which, from the scarcity of writers, is called, “the dark and unhappy age”—but **PROBUS**, of the Irish nation. He wrote the life of **S. PATRICK**, in two books, which may be found in **BEDE**’s works, to whom they are falsely ascribed. Whether this was **PROBUS** the Grammarian, whom some make the author of an ancient commentary on **JUVENAL**, seems undetermined. When one considers the continual wars in this last century with the Danes, it is not to be wondered at, that literature should be almost extinguished, and that so few men of learning should be found in Ireland in that period. It is impossible for arts or sciences to flourish, or even almost to exist, in a country where the inhabitants are either called away to the field to defend their liberties and lives, or when they are under constant alarms from an enemy lest their property be lost at home.

The time however was now approaching, when the invasions of the Danes, the battles of the Irish with them, and the power which they had acquired in Ireland, with some short interruptions, through a course of two hundred years, were all to be at an end.

Such was the surprising turn of affairs brought about by providence in the Irish nation, by the quiet deposal of **MALACHY** from the throne, and the advancement of **BRIAN**, contrary to the constitution, without bloodshed. When the hopes of the Irish, and the fears of the Danes seemed to be almost at an end, the great disposer of all things on a sudden changed the scene; and the interest of that people in Ireland was quite determined: an interest which had cost rivers of blood, and
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a great deal of time and violence to plant and cultivate. Next to the pleasure and good providence of GOD, it seems principally to have been owing to the daring and active spirit of BRIAN BOROMY, and which descended to his posterity. But whatever occasioned this turn in the affairs of Ireland, it must be owned to have been astonishing, that an interest so antient, and so well established, was so soon and completely broken and finally disappeared.



T H E
H I S T O R Y
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BRIAN.
A. D. 1002.

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THE quiet resignation of the throne by MALACHY, together with the great number of Chiefs and Princes who deserted him, made so general an impression throughout the nation, that without taking time to consider that the advancement of BRIAN BOROMY was against the right of succession in the Heremonian line, they presently entered into his measures, and almost unanimously acquiesced in placing him on the throne. It must be owned however that there were some petty Princes, who either having claims of their own upon the crown, or out of friendship and alliance with the deposed Monarch or out of ill will to the new one, opposed themselves to the general voice; and though they did not pretend to make war upon BRIAN, yet they refused to acknowledge him for their lawful sovereign. But he gave them no time to form themselves into confederacies and acquire strength

strength against him. He sent his son MORTOGH with some of the provincial troops of Munster and Leinster, particularly with the martial tribe of O Neills, against some of these malecontents; and they carried away spoils to a great value with three hundred prisoners. He himself marched at the head of a great body of forces against others, whom he soon reduced to obedience. The principal nobility of the province of Ulster met him with their hostages, as a security for their allegiance, as did also those of the country of Tirconnel. In his progress he went to Ardmagh, and laid twenty ounces of gold upon the altar by way of oblation to Heaven for his advancement to the monarchy. Whilst BRIAN and his son were employed thus in establishing the tranquillity of the island, the Danes were not idle in endeavouring to disturb it. The coasts of Ulster were plundered with great cruelty, and many spoils and prisoners were carried off. Another party landed upon the coasts of Munster, plundered Cork, and set it on fire; and a third, in conjunction with some of the inhabitants of Leinster, entered Meath and committed many dreadful ravages. But these incursions were very amply revenged, and the last especially by MORTOGH the Monarch's son. The Danish Prince and his son were taken by stratagem, and put to death: MORTOGH harrassed the Danes and their allies in Leinster, with his victorious army, to the walls of Dublin; making them pay very severely for their pillage in the country of Meath.

The new Monarch having fixed himself in the quiet possession of the throne, and suppressed all his foreign and domestic enemies, he was resolved to approve himself as great in council as he had been in arms, and as fit to direct affairs in the cabinet of state, as to lead an army on the day of battle. He had given many proofs of his being a General invincible in the field, of consummate experience in the art of war, of munificence to his friends, and of clemency to his enemies. But these were not all the qualifications he was possessed of, nor these all the virtues which filled the heart of BRIAN. His heroic victories and accomplishments, in an age of heroism, and among a people who carried it higher than almost any other nation round the globe, could not fail to attract the affections of his subjects in a great degree: but there was still something wanting to complete his own glory and the happiness of his people; and this the Monarch undertook with equal alacrity and success.

BRIAN, success. Military skill and courage are ornamented in Princes as well as useful to their people: but in such times as those, and in such a country as Ireland, they were absolutely necessary. However when this people were entirely at union among themselves, and free from all incursions or even the fear of any enemies, this skill and courage was no longer necessary, was no longer useful; and other qualifications must be possessed, other virtues besides munificence and clemency must be exerted by a sovereign, to make him amiable in himself and beloved by all his subjects. Let us see what the Monarch did in order to this end.

Though BRIAN had triumphed over all his enemies foreign and domestic, and a general tranquillity unknown to most of his predecessors prevailed universally over the island, yet he had sense enough to know, that it would be in vain for him to attempt the reformation of those disorders which the wars had introduced into his dominions, unless he could secure the kingdom from fresh commotions: and he had knowledge enough of his countrymen to be convinced, that nothing could so effectually contribute to prevent these, as keeping the petty Princes and the chiefs in temper. Wherefore the first thing he did was to confirm them all in their ancient privileges, and to bestow presents or honours of different kinds upon them all according to their degree. The one shewed his inviolable regard to justice and liberty; and the other was a proof of his generous and princely soul: and whenever that proof is wanting, a Monarch may be just, may be merciful, may enact good laws, and consult the welfare of his people, but he will not be beloved, he will be despised and censured. No character in men of wealth produces more contempt and disesteem than that of covetousness; but in Princes, in whom private frugality is not a virtue, it will be always held detestable.

When BRIAN had thus secured the loyalty of his nobles and great men—in the only way that it can be secured—by winning their hearts, his next care was to provide for the interests of religion, which had suffered so greatly in the Danish war. To this end he summoned the clergy of every order; and making a strict enquiry into the pretensions of every one who had been ejected, he restored them all to their several claims; every Bishop to his
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diocese,

diocese, every abbot to his monastery, and every priest to his church. The temporalities also, which had been sequestered by the Danes to other purposes, were recovered again to the right owners, and established on their old foundations. It must be observed to the honour of this Monarch's understanding, as well as of his goodness of heart, that this extraordinary care of religion and its ministers, was a step as political as it was pious: and it is a lesson to Kings and rulers of modern times, that in order to be secure and quite at ease in the state, they should take care to provide an interest in the church.

The fair face of religion, which had been long obscured, being once more restored, BRIAN made it his business to secure and improve it as much as possible. He added to the re-edifying of the monasteries that had been destroyed, and the repairs of several churches, the founding of the cathedral of Killaloe: and he recalled the exiled members of the collegiate societies, and restored them to their employments and revenues.

But besides the motives of piety and of his own genius, BRIAN, who knew the use and ornament of knowledge in religion, left the learning of the clergy of that time should die with them, and not descend to their posterity, resolved to encourage the interest, and revive the study of learning. To this end he repaired the academical colleges that had been destroyed by the Danes, and erected new ones where they were wanted in several parts of the island. In these seminaries were taught the liberal sciences, and all the branches of philosophy and polite literature, as well as theology. With a munificence becoming a Monarch, and as a patron of learning—which all Monarchs should be, to add to their usefulness and importance—he built public libraries for poor students, and supported youths of genius in their studies, who had not the means to support themselves. He spared no cost nor labour by favour or rewards to provide the most eminent professors for these academies that could be procured: and having thus revived the decayed state of learning, many men of great abilities in all professions, were trained up, to the great advantage of Church and State. But because this noble design must have
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lost a great part of its usefulness, if provision had not been made for the elements and first foundations of learning, therefore BRIAN repaired and added to the public schools; and encouraged all the people of ability to send their children to them. I saw in the College library a manuscript history of Ireland by GEOGHAGAN, translated from an old book, which is said by the author, to be compiled from COLUMCILL, O MORE, and others, that were professed Irish Chroniclers. In that work it is related, that “BRIAN observing into what ignorance the kingdom was fallen, by the devastations and outrages of the Danes, having assembled all the nobility, bishops, and great men at Cashell, he caused all their history from the time in which it had been left off, to be recorded in the Psalter there, which they all signed; copies of which were sent into every province for the use of each provincial King, and no credit was to be given to any other relations of public affairs than what were contained in those chronicles.” Though BRIAN did not live to execute all the great designs he had formed to promote learning and religion, yet he lived to do a great deal; and more, it may be said truly, than any other Monarch that had gone before him, or followed after him.

The great actions of BRIAN, which have been already mentioned, are evident demonstrations of his piety, wisdom, and benevolence, as a legislator: we are next to see his regard to justice and humanity, his love of his country, and a constant attention to the public good. As the Danes were a mercantile people, and imported many commodities for use and pleasure, which made their commerce a benefit to the nation, the Monarch permitted those who were settled in the Sea ports, in Dublin, Wexford, Limerick, Waterford, and Cork, to remain there for the sake of trade; taking security for their allegiance, and a large annual tribute for his protection. But all the rest of the foreigners were expelled out of the island; and the territories which they were possessed of, and which he recovered from them, he returned to the original proprietors who were living, or to those of their posterity who could make out their claim: the other lands, for which no owners were to be found, he did not reserve for sycophants and favourites—the needy and rapacious locusts of a court—nor to enrich his own relations; but he distributed them amongst
a people

a people useful to a state, the industrious and skillful husbandmen, in order to encrease and encourage agriculture. The great mind of BRIAN was not to be corrupted and enslaved by flattery: he was his own minister; and he dispensed justice to the meanest subject in his dominions with an impartial hand. In order to prevent confusion, and to preserve the genealogies with more regularity, he appointed surnames of distinction to all the several branches of the Milesian race, and to the other principal families in the kingdom; which was a thing unknown in Ireland, till that time: and, according to the observation of several writers, it was not till this time that surnames began to be ascertained in France, England, and Scotland; first among people of distinction, and afterwards by degrees, among the inferior sort.

That he might encourage inland traffick and correspondence, and consequently promote acquaintance and harmony among his people, as well as their ease and pleasure, BRIAN built bridges over several deep rivers, and made fords in others that before were not passable; he mended the high roads that were capable of being mended, and laid causeways along others whose soil was too deep and miry. Having observed the great utility of garrisons to the Danes, he made use of all their raths or forts to the same purpose, and erected other fortifications in all the parts of the kingdom where they were wanted. Through a partiality, which I think not discommendable, for his own province of Munster, of which all his ancestors had had the government from the earliest ages of the pentarchy, and where he then kept his court, he fortified no less than thirteen royal palaces in that province; in order to secure it from foreign or domestic enemies. All the corruptions which had crept into the established laws of the kingdom were expunged; and new laws were added to those already in force. In short the people were inspired with such a spirit of honour, virtue, and religion by the great example of BRIAN, and by his excellent administration, that, as a proof of it, we are informed, that a young lady of great beauty, adorned with jewels and a costly dress, undertook a journey alone from one end of the kingdom to the other, with a wand only in her hand at the top of which was a ring of exceeding great value: and such an impression had the laws and government of this Monarch made on the minds of all the people, that no attempt was made

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upon her honour, nor was she robbed of her clothes or jewels. Such sudden mighty changes, do the spirit of a great, and the genius of a wise Prince, produce!

In order still further to preserve the public tranquillity, BRIAN appointed a governor over every cantred of land and every city throughout the island; and to prevent any disputes among the petty Princes and chiefs, he set forth injunctions to regulate their precedency in all public places. Because however trifling this affair may seem, and is really so in fact, yet it hath occasioned disputes which have had very serious and important consequences. Besides, made as men are made, scarce any thing of a public nature is too trifling for the attention of a wise and good legislator. The Danes in Ireland, it hath been observed, had been for some time converted to the Christian faith; but this conversion, it may be presumed, was not general. For at this time an ordinance was proclaimed by BRIAN, that no Dane should continue to live in any part of Ireland who had not embraced the Catholic and Apostolic faith: and that they might not relapse into the idolatry and superstition of their former state, they were all of them to hold their favours of the Monarch, upon no other terms, notwithstanding their tribute, than doing their duty to GOD, and adhering to the religion of CHRIST. This condition was so well observed by these foreigners, that they not only all professed to believe in him and were baptized, but many of them became so exemplary and so learned, as to be consecrated Bishops of the cities which they inhabited, by their countrymen the Norman Archbishops of Canterbury; as we shall see in its proper place.

Having given the reader this view of the public acts of BRIAN, which shew the greatness of his understanding and the goodness of his heart, some account must now be related of the magnificence and splendor with which he supported his royal dignity; in order to convince him that BRIAN acted the Monarch in every circumstance of his reign. The place of his residence was at the palace of Kinkora, the same as when he was only King of Munster; but here his court, his retinue, and the sumptuous hospitality of his table, were in all respects becoming the majesty of a King of Ireland. These may be guessed at in some degree from the astonishing quantity of provisions.

provisions which was annually sent in by the other three provinces, besides his constant revenue from his own province of Munster. The former is computed at two thousand six hundred and seventy oxen, one thousand three hundred and seventy hogs, one hundred and eighty tons of iron, three hundred and twenty five hogheads of claret from the Danes of Limerick, one hundred and fifty pipes of other wine of various sorts from the Danes of Dublin, and five hundred mantles from the country of Tirconnell. These annual tributes, which together with twelve hundred oxen and a thousand mantles from the province of Munster when the King of that province was not Monarch, were established by ancient laws for the use and service of the crown; and each country had its known proportion, which it is not necessary to recite.

The book of Rights of Munster, first begun by BINEN—and which, Dr. RAYMOND says, is the oldest book of history extant next the Greek and Roman—gives a particular account of the chief rent or tribute due to its Kings from their own province; as well as from some other particular territories in the rest, by ancient custom for former services. I do not think it material enough to trouble the reader with this recital, and shall inform him only that in the gross, it amounted to fourteen hundred and fifty oxen, three thousand six hundred and fifty cows, four thousand eight hundred hogs, two thousand six hundred wethers, one hundred horses, eleven hundred and fifty mantles, a fleet well manned, a body of armed men to attend the King from Ossory, another body of armed men in honour of St. PATRICK and against the Danes from Conaught, the Boromean tribute from Leinster, and an host of armed men from the Danes of Dublin against Leinster in case of their disobedience: and these rights and privileges—except those relating to the Danes—are said to have been paid from the time of ANGUS, when St. PATRICK first arrived in Ireland, to the dissolution of their monarchy. These great revenues, which were sent every year to the palace of Kincora from his own and the other provinces, will give the reader some idea of the pomp and grandeur of the court of BRIAN; where none were permitted to wear their swords, but the renowned tribe of the Dalgais, who were his body guards.

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When BRIAN had established peace, and given a happiness to his kingdom, which it had scarce ever known before ; and when by his public munificence, and other virtues and accomplishments, he had recovered the ancient character of the Irish, which had been long upon the decline, he determined to build a fleet of ships ; not only to prevent any more invasions from the Danes, but to make his power formidable at sea. Notwithstanding this is the natural and proper strength of an island, yet this was never attended to in that country so much as it ought to have been, especially after it had been harrassed so often by these invasions ; and the same is true of England, in the ages of which I am speaking. But nothing that was necessary to the peace and prosperity of his people escaped the vast mind of BRIAN ; and a considerable navy was set on foot for the use and ornament of his dominions. Amidst other preparations for this purpose, he sent to the King of Leinster, whose sister he had married, to desire that he would furnish him with three of the largest and longest masts which his territories would produce. This request being agreeable to the provincial King, he ordered all his woods to be surveyed, and the three finest trees to be cut down and hewed for the Monarch's service ; intending to accompany them to the Court of BRIAN.

But a violent contest arising in the way, between the three tribes, which were appointed to carry the masts, about the point of precedence ; and the dispute reaching the ears of the King of Leinster, he immediately rode up to them, and not only determined which of the tribes should have the honour of first approaching the presence of the Monarch, but in the heat of his zeal and partiality he also dismounted ; and putting his shoulders under the mast which belonged to his favourite tribe, he took his share of the burden as a common bearer. He had upon him at that time a rich silk mantle, embroidered with gold and silver, and fringed with lace of great value, which had but a short time before been presented to him by the King of Ireland : and in the struggle that he made to distinguish himself upon this occasion, the golden button which fastened it at the neck flew off, and was lost. As minute a circumstance as this may seem, yet the reader will be convinced, that it was absolutely
necessary

necessary to be related, when he finds that it was productive of one of the greatest events in the whole Irish history.

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When the mafts were brought to Kincora, and the ufual ceremonies were paff between the Monarch and the provincial King, the latter was welcomed very affectionately by his fiftter the Queen of Ireland. In a fhort time after, being defirous to repair the diforder of his mantle, and wifhing his fiftter would fix another golden button in the room of that he had loft, that he might not appear to the Monarch to have ill ufed or flighted the prefent which he had made him; the King of Leinfter informed her of the difpute, and of his readinefs to fhew his loyalty and affection to the King her hufband, by affifting to carry one of the Mafts himfelf, which had occafioned the lofs of the button. The Queen his fiftter being a woman of a true Irish fpirit, and being fired with a reflexion on the glory of her anceftors, who had never paid homage to any Prince in the world, was fo incenfed at this fervile difpofition of her brother, to fubmit under a burden like a common labourer, that fhe upbraided him with his meannefs of fpirit fo unworthy of his illuftrious houfe, in the fevereft terms fhe could recollect; and fnatching his mantle from his foulders with the utmoft indignation, fhe threw it into the fire.

The King of Leinfter appeared like a man thunder-ftuck at this violent rebuke from the Queen his fiftter, to honour whole hufband he had undergone this difgrace; and perhaps too, he was made afhamed of himfelf by her remonftrance for this degeneracy from the fpirit of his anceftors. Moved, however, as he was with her, and though no body was witnefs of this treatment, yet he fuppreffed his paffion at that time, and made no reply. But the next day, as he was looking upon a game at chefs, which was playing between MORTOGH, the eldeft fon of BRIAN, and one of his Coufins; the King of Leinfter, unfairly as a ftander by, advised a move, which loft MORTOGH the game. The Prince of Ireland, being extremely nettled at this impertinent interpoftion—as every chefs player will believe—among other things in his paffion, told the King of Leinfter, that if he had given as good advice to the Danes, they would not have loft the battle of Glen-madma, where their defeat was owing
to

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to him. The King replied with equal quickness and resentment, that if the Danes had been defeated by his advice, he would soon put them in a way to retrieve their loss, and to take their full revenge of him and the King his father. The spirit of MORTOCH, which before was chafed, was upon this threatening, under no restraint: and he answered the King of Leinster, that the foreign forces had been so often vanquished by his father and himself, that he feared nothing from them, though they should be stirred up, and commanded by the King of Leinster himself.

In those days of fighting, and among those high spirited and warlike men the Princes of Ireland, this was a sort of challenge, which could not easily be digested. MALMORDA, the King of Leinster, said no more, but retired immediately to his chamber; where reflecting upon the indignities he had received at the court of BRIAN, from his Queen and Son, he was so much hurt and disturbed, that he refused to appear at supper: and lest the Prince of Ireland should take an alarm at this refusal, and seize upon his person, in order to prevent his revenge, he rose very early the next morning, and without the least ceremony whatever, departed from Kincora, fully determined to gratify his resentment, at all events as soon as possible. The Monarch being informed of his sudden and abrupt departure, without giving any notice of his intention, was much surprized: and finding upon enquiry, that he had not been used with proper courtesy and decorum at his court, he was resolved, if possible, to induce him to return; and to this purpose, he dispatched an officer after him, with the utmost expedition, to desire he would return to the palace, and accept the presents which the King of Ireland had provided as an acknowledgment of his last favour.

But whether the King of Leinster suspected BRIAN's sincerity, or whether he was too much incensed with the rude treatment he had before received to forgive it, which is most probable, as soon as the officer of the court had delivered his message, MALMORDA was so much enraged, that he struck him violently thrice upon the head, and fractured his skull. When he returned to Kincora, with an account of his reception from the King of Leinster, some of the household troops—perhaps
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instigated by MORTOGH—looking upon this rude and contemptuous insult upon the King's messenger as an insult offered to the King himself, desired BRIAN's permission to pursue MALMORDA, and to bring him back to answer for this indignity. But BRIAN considering that his Queen and his son had been the first aggressors, and that the laws of hospitality in his palace had been infringed, in their inelegant treatment of MALMORDA, refused this request: and yet as the King of Leinster had in his turn violated the privileges of heralds or officers of a court, in assaulting the messenger who was sent on a civil errand, the Monarch assured them that he would chastise the insolence of MALMORDA at his own doors; and by this means he permitted him to make his escape with safety into his province.

No sooner was the King of Leinster arrived at his own palace, than he summoned a convention of the Princes and the Chiefs under his jurisdiction; to whom he related in the most aggravating manner the indignity which he had been treated with at the court of BRIAN. The states of Leinster being irritated with this artful representation of the uncivil treatment of their King, fell precipitately into his snare, and with the inconsiderable heat which possesses a multitude, they unanimously resolved to join the power of the Danes when they were collected, and to fall upon the King of Ireland. A most absurd resolution, and to them a very fatal one! we must remember however that to Princes haughty and independent as were the Irish, “who were quick in discerning an injury and impatient to revenge it, who esteemed it infamous to submit to an enemy and cowardly to forgive him, who considered the right of punishing those who had injured them as a privilege of their order and a mark of independence”, all other resentment appeared extremely unsatisfactory.

But I believe there is not in any history in the world, a stronger proof than this, “how great a matter a little fire kindleth”! The Queen of Ireland had given her brother a passionate reproof for his extreme servility; and the Prince had behaved with an indecent warmth to him for his officious interposition in a game at chess: but were these affronts, when joined together, of importance enough to engage the kingdom in a quarrel, to destroy the happy peaceful days it was in possession of, to call in a foreign enemy which had
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cost it rivers of blood to exterminate and subdue, and to bring the grey heirs of the best Monarch that ever sat on the throne of Ireland with sorrow to the grave? A Monarch too, who had no hand in putting these affronts upon MALMORDA, and who condescended to desire that he might make up the breach which these affronts had occasioned. But the same littleness of mind, which induced the King of Leinster to sink so much beneath his dignity, as to act the part of a common labourer to which he was not called by any necessity—for then it would have been great indeed—prevented his reconciliation. For whatever may be the sentiments of the men of the world upon this head, yet nothing is more demonstrable, than that a forgiveness of injuries upon submission, is the strongest mark that can be shewed of true greatness of mind. But this was a disposition unknown to the times, as well as to the heart of the King of Leinster.

No sooner had the states of his province joined in the resolution above-mentioned, than MALMORDA dispatched messengers to the King of Denmark, imploring his aid against the Monarch; whom he represented as a tyrant cruel and insupportable, and who had particularly oppressed the Danes, and obliged them to abandon all their possessions, except in the seaport towns, and the lands adjacent. The King of Denmark gave himself no trouble to enquire into the truth of this complaint, or to offer his mediation to make up the breach: but accepting the proposal of MALMORDA with great eagerness, he fitted out a fleet with twelve thousand men, and put his two sons at the head of them, who landed safe in the port of Dublin. As soon as the King of Leinster had received such a powerful succour, and had assurance of being joined by the Danes that were before in the country, he sent a herald to declare war against the King of Ireland, and to challenge him to a battle in the fields about Clentarf, within two miles of Dublin. The Monarch did not want for intelligence of the great preparations that were making against him by the King of Leinster: and there was not a man then in the kingdom, who loved his country and wished its welfare and prosperity, who was not alarmed and troubled at this arrival of the Danish army; as the war might be attended with very fatal consequences to its peace and liberty. They had the utmost confidence in their Monarch, who had always triumphed over his enemies, but he was now in extreme old age; and though MORTOGH
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and his other sons were very valiant and warlike Princes, yet the present tranquillity and happiness of the nation was a thing certain, but the event of war against a powerful and numerous enemy was precarious; and even if it should be successful would cost a great deal of the best Irish blood.

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The declaration of war was returned by BRIAN against the King of Leinster; nor were any preparations neglected that could be made, in order to repel this formidable combination against the public peace. All the provincial troops of Munster and Conaught were called out, with their several Princes at their head; and many chiefs of clans, who were not liable to such service, voluntarily joined with all their people, out of gratitude to their good old Monarch, and to prevent the slavery of their country. Even the deposed MALACHY made a shew of assisting the Irish army, as an auxiliary, with all the forces of Meath, of which he was still King: and when these several bodies were collected together, though their number is not ascertained, yet from many circumstances it may be concluded, they made up an army not inferior to that of the enemy. Though BRIAN was then in the eighty eighth year of his age, and could not possibly retain vigour enough to be of any use, yet when a battle was to be fought which concerned his country, and upon the success of which the liberty of Ireland might depend, he had still so much of the spirit of the warrior and the patriot in him, that there was no persuading him to stay behind. Though his great age had unstrung or palsied every nerve, yet the din of arms, to which he had been trained up from his infancy, and in which he had shone with supreme lustre, had warmed the almost frozen blood in his veins; and he would march at the head of his confederate army, though he was so extremely feeble, that he was obliged to give the command of it to MORTOGH his eldest son.

It might be said here with truth indeed, that the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak: and when they arrived in the plains about Clontarf, where he army of Leinster and the Danes were in battle array, and BRIAN had seen and assisted in drawing up the order in which his troops were formed, he was persuaded by his son to retire into his tent, and wait the issue of the battle there. The state of the heart of such a hero in that conjuncture, is easier to be conceived than well expressed. But for a man of invincible courage, and

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of marvellous success in war, to be obliged to stagger out of the field under the burden of old age, and to desert his sons and grandsons whom he had so often led in arms, when they were just about to expose their lives for the liberty of his country, of which he had been the restorer, it must be a very affecting situation. No sooner however had the good old BRIAN withdrawn, than the fatal signal was given on both sides to begin the charge. This was the crisis which MALACHY chose to revenge himself on the Monarch for pushing him off the throne; which though he had quietly acquiesced in for a dozen years, yet it is plain he had not forgiven. He had collected the forces of Meath on the declaration of war against the Monarch, and he had incorporated them with the Irish army when they began their march; but just as the sound of the trumpets and the shouts of both armies gave the signal of battle, he wheeled off with his battalions to a distance; hoping by that means to strike a terror into the forces of BRIAN, and through the confusion that would ensue to give the victory to his enemies.

But the army of Ireland, with the sons of their invincible and beloved Monarch at their head, were not to be thus dismayed; and they looked upon this defection of the King of Meath with contempt instead of terror. They were led on by MORTOGH, and the other Princes, with a courage and firmness worthy of their descent; and they met an enemy, it must be owned, which put all their skill and valour to the test. Notwithstanding the onset was made on both sides with a terrible fierceness, yet the ranks were not broken. Every man stood immovable in his rank, till he fell by the hand of an enemy, and his post was filled immediately by those behind him: in this equal conflict the fight continued for some time; and victory seemed to hover as it were in suspense over both armies. But at length the good genius of BRIAN, and the cause of virtuous liberty prevailed: the Danes were pushed so vigorously by the Momonians and their Princes, that they were no longer able to stand the shock; and being put into disorder, and not daring to rally, were soon totally routed. The army of Leinster, perceiving their auxiliaries, upon whom they chiefly depended, thus overthrown and put to flight, were discomfited to such a degree, that the defeat became universal, and a most dreadful carnage ensued. They had done all that courage and dexterity, a thirst of glory or revenge, could inspire men with; and though

it was their fate to lose the field, yet the conquerors won it at a dear rate.

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Indeed the best blood they paid for it was not in open battle, but by treachery: for MORTOGH, riding through the dead and wounded after the enemy, was called to by one of the sons of the King of Denmark, who knew him, and who implored his help; telling him his wounds were not mortal. The magnanimous Prince, whose mercy was not inferior to his courage, immediately dismounted; and as he was lifting the Dane up, in order to give him succour, the perfidious monster stabbed him to the heart. Thus fell the valiant and victorious MORTOGH, the eldest son of BRIAN; who fleshed his sword against the Danes in open battle at thirteen years of age, and had fought by his father's side in every battle after, with equal glory and success. As though born always to share the same fate in war, about the same moment that he met with this ignoble death, the aged Monarch, father of his line, was slaughtered in his pavillion, by some of the flying Danes; who, seeing it unguarded, stopped long enough to butcher the helpless, hoary King, and too long to preserve themselves; being all of them cut to pieces.

In this deplorable manner, ended the glorious many days of BRIAN BOROMY, King of Munster, and Monarch of Ireland. As great a figure as the reader hath seen him make in the foregoing pages—and a greater perhaps is not to be met with in any history of mankind—yet his character will deserve a little more illustration than what we have found of it already. Though in his youth he delighted much in the exercises of the field, and in the feats of military skill and valour, yet they did not extinguish his love of learning, and the polite arts; of which he continued all through his life to be very fond. As he grew in years, this inclination to literature encreased; and it is therefore no wonder, when he had established the peace of the nation, that he endeavoured so much to cure the ignorance and barbarity of the age he lived in. Indeed the age he lived in, it must be owned, was deluged with blood and violence through the discord and animosity natural to the Irish, as well as through the repeated incursions of the savage Danes: which is a circumstance

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that makes his own endowments and dispositions still more extraordinary : and though it hath been objected against, that he deposed the reigning Monarch, and thrust himself with violence into the throne, yet this objection is not just ; at least it does not operate with that force which those who have brought it, designed it should.

It is true, that the Heremonian family had for several ages past, confined the monarchy of Ireland to themselves, in exclusion of the other houses of HEBER and IR, of the old Milesian line. But it is likewise as true, that the succession to the throne had always been elective : that no regard had ever been had from the beginning to hereditary right, but to superior wisdom and valour ; and that the Heremonian succession had on many occasions before this, been interrupted, by electing sovereigns out of the other branches of the royal line. Besides, it does not appear, that the motion for deposing MALACHY came from BRIAN ; or that he proposed himself for a successor on the throne. On the contrary, it hath been related, that the States of Munster and Conaught, reflecting on the melancholy and distressed condition of the nation, through the luxury and supineness of the Monarch, were the first that moved to dethrone him ; and for the same reasons they were seconded by the united voice of the people. At the same time that this extraordinary step was resolved upon, they applied to BRIAN as the deliverer of his country, and besought him to take the reins of government into his hands ; that being possessed of the sovereign power, he might do that for the rest of the kingdom, which he had already done for his own province of Munster, and so complete the destruction of their foreign enemies.

It is not to be supposed, at the age of seventy-six, which was then the age of the King,—an age when ambition must be dead in the breast of every man—that a kingdom in itself could have any charms for BRIAN ; and much less such a kingdom as was involved in all the circumstances of ruin and distress. It was impossible that he could look upon the crown of Ireland at that time, in any other light than as a burden upon his hoary head ; which it would be a great trouble to him to wear, and which would make the evening of his days more insupportable. But however,
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when the public good, and the just desires of his countrymen called upon him, he sacrificed the repose which was due to his old age, and exerted that resolution and magnanimity, and all those other heroic virtues, which have made his name venerable to succeeding times. His learning has been taken notice of in the history of his reign, and his religion may be easily enough collected from thence.

It may be proper, however, to mention, that as the sweetness of his disposition, and the regularity of his morals, were not impaired or injured by the exercises of war, or the liberties of a military life, so neither did those avocations, nor the splendor of a court, nor the necessary demands of state, prevent the exercises of piety: and from that order and devotion which his own example had introduced into his court—an example which gave him the reputation of a Saint after his death—he endeavoured to spread a spirit of seriousness and religion throughout his kingdom. To this end he gave the Bishops and Clergy the highest marks of his esteem and favour, and all possible encouragement in the discharge of their holy office: and by this encouragement, and by the particular friendship with which he treated every one who distinguished himself in the service of his country, by his learning, abilities, or religious zeal, he produced that alteration in the manners of the people, within the compass of his short and busy reign, which hath been mentioned. To all this it may be added, that his condescension, easiness of access, and pleasantry of conversation in all his calm and social hours, were equal to the courage and the greatness of his mind in time of danger or distress: and all together, they make him compared to no one with so much propriety as to our ALFRED.

This great Irish Monarch was in twenty skirmishes, or rencounters with the Danes, in every one of which he was successful; and he commanded in chief in nine and twenty pitched battles against them, without losing one. The reputation which he had acquired in the field of battle, was to be equalled by few in any age of the world, but it was to be excelled by none. He commanded in more engagements than J. CAESAR, distinguished himself in all of them with amazing intrepidity, and even

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fought up to the character of a hero in romance. In short, it may be said of BRIAN BOROMY, that he was a prodigy of goodness, of understanding, and of greatness. To look at him through his piety, one would think he had spent all his life in a cloister; to examine the productions of his genius, we should be inclined to believe, that his whole time had been occupied in learning and the sciences; and to view him as a general and a Monarch, he appears to have studied nothing but the art of war and politicks, the conquest of his enemies, and the ease and prosperity of his subjects. How much is it then to be regretted, that the ALEXANDERS and the CÆSARS, and the other tyrants and oppressors of mankind, should meet with such noble writers to perpetuate their memory, when a BRIAN, whose superior abilities were entirely directed to the good of his people, should have the misfortune to be recorded only by Monks; the lowest and most insufficient of all writers!

With this thunderbolt of war, and his eldest son MORTOGH, fell many other heroic valiant Princes of his house, his sons and grandsons, in this fatal battle; besides the Kings and Princes of territories in his jurisdiction. On the other side, the Generals of the Danes, the two sons of the King of Denmark, and their unnatural ally the King of Leinster, whose implacable animosity had been the sole occasion of this war, with almost all the Chiefs and Princes in his province, met with the same calamitous fate in this memorable action. Of the Danish army, it is said, that four thousand perished in the first charge, and six thousand seven hundred more in the action and pursuit: the Leinster troops did not suffer so much, having only three thousand seven hundred slain in the whole. But the victory was not gained without the loss of four thousand of the Irish forces under the Monarch. Such were the miserable effects of a war, entered into to gratify the resentment of a Prince, for a trifling affront, not worth the private anger of an hour! Could his own death alone have paid the forfeit of his unchristian and unmanly rage, it would have been justly merited and unlamented. But to be so far subdued by an irascible temper, as to draw out thousands to be butchered in his private quarrel, will make the memory of MALMORDA, King of Leinster, infamous to posterity: indeed it will have a worse effect, it will give an unfavourable idea of the religion

religion of the ancient Irish of that time, whose natural ferocity was still untamed, and the barbarity of their manners still unreformed by it. It must be observed however that this fall, from the politeness, virtue, learning, and good manners, which had distinguished the Irish nation from all others, has been attributed by a late historian—and perhaps not untruly—to their communication with those barbarous Normans which had been the pest of Europe.

The battle of Clontarfe is such a memorable event in the Irish history, and notwithstanding some few skirmishes after, did in its consequence so effectually destroy the Danish power in Ireland, as to extinguish all further attempts against it by those people, that I have dwelt upon it longer than may be thought necessary. It is reported by MAC CURTAIN, that BRIAN was not killed, but mortally wounded in his tent; and that DONOGH one of his sons, who had survived the action and then commanded the royal army, having buried their dead in the field of battle, brought the wounded Monarch, and the bodies of his brothers and the other Princes slain in the action to Kilmainham, a mile west of Dublin on the other side the Liffy from Clontarfe, where the last were honourably interred; and that MORTOGH particularly had a long stone standing at one end of his tomb, with his name written upon it. Of the good old Monarch he says further, that finding his end approaching he called for his chaplain the Bishop of Inis-cathy, from whom he received the holy rites of the church, and then made his will; leaving his crown to TEIG his then eldest son. The day after his death the clergy of the abby of Swords came and carried his body thither, from whence it was fetch'd by two other setts of religious successively to their respective Monasteries, and then it was met by the Archbishop of Ardmagh accompanied by a great number of Princes and clergy of all orders, who carried it to Ardmagh; where he had desired to be buried, and where it was interred with all possible solemnity and extreme sorrow.

The royal army having obtained this signal victory, though with the loss of their Monarch and some of the best blood in the nation, had nothing to do but to break up and return home. Accordingly the two bodies separated: those of the province of Conaught took the shortest way home to their own country;

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country; and the Momonians began their march under the conduct of DONOGH the son of BRIAN. What was then become of TEIG the eldest brother, and how it happened that DONOGH was the chief commander of the Momonians, no historian has informed us, except MAC CURTIN; who says that TEIG was absent at the battle of Clontarfe, having been sent by his father into the county of Louth to collect a part of the royal tribute which the people of that country had neglected to pay; that DONOGH being ambitious to possess himself of the sovereignty, sent for the Prince of Ely, and offered to release him of all the dues paid by his country to the King of the southern half of the island, if he would immediately surprize his brother TEIG and carry him away into Ely; and that this scheme was effected, and the Prince lost his life. But KEATING names TEIG as one of the sons of BRIAN who attended him in this battle: and of DONOGH he says afterwards, that he was an usurper on the rights of his elder brother, whom he put into the hands of Ely O Carroll men who treacherously murdered him; and for which base action he was deposed, and obliged to leave his country in order to save his life. But this was so many years after the battle of Clontarfe and his assuming the royal authority, that one cannot suppose it to be a punishment for the murder of his brother at this time; and if he was not murdered then, we are at a loss to know what became of him for so many years.

Be this however as it might; which I shall attempt to explain in the next book, DONOGH certainly was at the head of all the Momonian forces in their march from Clontarfe to their own province. But they had scarcely proceeded above twenty miles, before the old dispute began to revive about the alternate government of Munster, devised by their great ancestor OLLIOLL OLUM, between the Princes of the Dalgarian and Eugonian tribes, the martial inhabitants of that province. They had fought indeed like brothers in the same cause, in the late engagement; and it was principally owing to the vigour and intrepidity of the illustrious Dalgais, in defence of their beloved chief who was also their provincial King and the Monarch of Ireland—that the royal army had proved victorious in that bloody battle. But these considerations were of no force: the Dalgais were very much reduced in their number by the slaughter of that day, and many of those then on the march

were

were wounded. The Eugénian Princes desirous to regain the sovereignty of their province, and finding their force greatly superior, thought this a proper time to renew their claim. Wherefore withdrawing their battalions to a little distance, they sent a message to DONOGH—till then the leader of both the bodies of the Momonians, as the son of BRIAN—demanding that he would relinquish all pretensions to the crown of Munster, which according to the disposal of their great ancestor was to be alternate; though his uncle and his father had violated this constitution.

It must be owned that this constitution had in the course of so many centuries been so often broken in upon by ambitious Princes, that though the Eugénians might have the plea of prescriptive right, yet it seems not a little ungenerous to take this opportunity to insist upon it, when they were three thousand effective men to one; when the family of BRIAN and the whole tribe of the Dalgais had suffered so much in the late engagement; and when they were upon the march home, in which it was impossible for DONOGH to encrease his forces. Whether he was more surprised or offended at this demand, it is difficult to determine: we may be very sure he must be both. But he boldly replied without hesitation, that the submission which the Eugénians paid to his uncle and his father was through force; that those Princes came to the sovereignty of the province, not by virtue of such an ancient disposition, but by their valour, which had wrested it from the Danes their common enemy; that he would endeavour to keep what had descended to him from such a father; that they durst not be so insolent as to demand his submission, if they had not taken the advantage of his misfortunes and their own superior number; and if the brave corps he commanded had not suffered so extremely in the late battle, instead of giving them hostages for his resignation of the crown, that he would chastize their mutiny and disobedience, and oblige them to give security for their future loyalty and submission.

When DONOGH had dismissed the messenger with this answer, which he perceived the Momonians were preparing to resent by arms, he communicated the contents of the extraordinary demand that had been made upon him, and the scorn and indignation with which he had treated it. The tribe of

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the Dalgais, who had a double tie upon them to revenge his cause—their right to the sovereignty of the province won by their own swords, and their adherence to the family of their late beloved king—were no sooner informed of the pretensions of the Eugenians, than they one and all declared they would stand by their Prince to the last extremity; and though the Eugenians should attack them in their present situation, with such superior numbers. The Eugenians indeed had determined to take the advantages they were possessed of, in order to vindicate their right and to settle the succession in the ancient channel; and therefore formed themselves in battle array. But DONOGH, being animated by the loyalty and resolution of his little army, and by the remembrance of the invincible Hero from whom he descended, when he saw the Eugenians stand to their arms and ready to fall upon him, commanded that the wounded should retire to a Danish rath at a little distance, with a proper guard to secure them; whilst he with the remainder should engage the enemy. The wounded men however considering that by this means their chief would be deprived of a third part of his forces, which all together were not half the number of the Eugenians, and being determined to act worthy of the tribe to which they belonged, refused their General's kindness, filled their wounds with green moss that was just at hand, and calling for their arms embodied themselves with their comrades, being resolved to share their fate. As soon as the Eugenians saw this desperate spirit of the Dalgaisian army, and finding their own soldiers, it may be, touched with compassion for their brave unhappy countrymen, with whom they had always fought before under one banner, they declined the engagement; and contented themselves with marching homeward by a different route.

Few such instances of moderation, as this, are to be met with in the history of this warlike people; and the cause of this perhaps is to be sought for, in the jealousy and suspicion of the Eugénian Prince who claimed the sovereignty, rather than in a spirit of magnanimity and forbearance which prevailed in the Momonian army. But however this might be, the invincible tribe of the Dalgais were not to return home without acquiring further renown for their valour and intrepidity. It seems the King of Ossory had conceived a mortal aversion to the late Monarch for the imprisonment of his father: and as these quarrels were continued from one generation to another, so neither

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DONOGH, nor even the Dalgais who had been the guards of BRIAN, were to escape the resentment of MAC GILLY-PATRICK the Ossorian King. To this purpose he assembled all his own army, and a powerful body of subsidies of Leinster, with a determined resolution to oppose the march of the Dalgaisian forces through his territories. When the scouts that he had dispatch'd to watch the motions of this tribe informed him of their approach, and that they were then encamped upon his borders, he sent a herald to DONOGH to demand hostages for a security that no subsistence nor contributions should be levied by his army as they marched through the territories of Ossory, and if he refused these conditions to declare war against him and that he would oppose their march and give him battle. Incensed with rage and indignation at this insulting message, DONOGH told the herald who brought it, that he was much surpris'd at the baseness of the King of Ossory in taking advantage of the distress of his army; that he himself should set it down as one of the greatest misfortunes of his whole life, to be thus expos'd to the insults of an insignificant petty Prince who was below his notice; and that notwithstanding his master had in a cowardly manner declared war against him, when he knew his army was so reduced as that he had but little more than a tenth part of the force of the army of Ossory, yet he was not afraid to meet this pusillanimous King in the field of battle; where he did not doubt, notwithstanding the great disparity of numbers, to make MAC GILLY-PATRICK feel and confess that the tribe of Dalgais were still invincible. The herald being unwilling to carry back this bold and high spirited answer to the King his master, presumed to argue the case with DONOGH; to set forth the number valour and good order of the combined army, and the wretched condition of the handful of men which were to oppose it; and thence attempted to dissuade him from his design of fighting. The Dalgaisian General, unused to such language even from Princes—for nothing was too perilous for his tribe not to attempt—was so enraged at this presumption of the herald, that he told him if the law of nations had not secured his person, he would order his tongue to be cut out for his insolence, and bid him repair immediately to his master with the answer that had been given him.

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As soon as the herald was departed, not doubting but the King of Ossory would immediately march to give him battle, when the force on both sides was so unequal, DONOGH lost no time in proclaiming to his little army the insolent demand of the King of Ossory, and the menace with which they were threatened upon a refusal; which his army resented as warmly as he could wish. When he had thus wound up their spirit to its former pitch, which was become languid through the fatigue and hardships they had undergone, his next care was to send off his wounded men to a little distance under a sufficient guard—though it would deprive him of a third part of his force—to break up his camp, and to form in order of battle to receive the enemy. But no sooner were the sick and wounded informed of the Prince's design with regard to them, than they earnestly besought him as before in the expected battle with the Eugenians, that they might share the same fate with him and their fellow soldiers, and either conquer or die. A man must be void of all feelings of tenderness and humanity, who does not feel on this occasion both for the General and the men. A scene of greater tenderness and distress can scarcely be figured in imagination; and the conflict in the breast of DONOGH, with affections that cut, like a two edged sword, both ways at once, is easier to be conceived than well described. His concern however for the lives of the sick and wounded got the better of his desire to please them, as well as not to weaken the strength he had, which was already but too unequal to the dreadful combat they were preparing for. He therefore ordered them to be informed, that though their request was worthy of the illustrious tribe whose name they bore, and he was charmed with their fidelity to him, yet as they were much more weakened with the loss of blood and the fatigues of their march than they were at the rupture with the Eugenians, he could not consent to put them under the unhappy dilemma they had marked out for themselves.

But this affectionate answer of their Prince, instead of assuaging the emotion kindled in their breast, made it the more violent, and produced such a resolution as I believe is not to be equalled in any history of mankind. As they were then encamped on the side of a wood, they desired the General would order a sufficient number of posts to be cut down, in order to be

drove into the ground on the field of battle between every two effective men; at which they might be tied, as a support, whilst their hands would be at liberty to annoy the enemy: besides this addition to the strength of his little army, they told him that the fury of their comrades would be redoubled, who would be ashamed to abandon them in that helpless state, and who must know that nothing but victory could prevent their slaughter. This proposal being urged in their behalf to DONOGH with great warmth, he reluctantly gave way; they bound up their wounds again with fresh moss; the posts were willingly made ready by the rest of the army; they marched to the field whereon they were to engage; and being drawn up in order of battle, the posts were drove into the ground along the ranks in the manner they had desired, to which they were making fast just as the army of the enemy came in fight.

Whether this unusual preparation to devote themselves thus resolutely to destruction, and of men who were deemed invincible, struck a pannaick into the front of the King of Ossory's army which ran like wild fire through the whole, or whether they thought the cause he had engaged them in was unjust, or whether they were touched with compassion when they saw the small number and the distresses of the Dalgaishian army, it is certain that the men of Ossory, as well as their allies from Leinster, absolutely refused to fight. The first is the only motive assigned for this refusal; and though the historians I compile from seldom trace effects to their causes, yet in this instance, as we may conjecture from the ruling manners of the age, they have probably led us to the true, if not the only source. For in answer to the remonstrance of the King of Ossory that they were almost ten to one, and his reproaches of their cowardice, we hear of no other plea made by his army than that the bravery of the Dalgais was irresistible; that the sick and wounded were as eager to fight as the effective men, as might be seen by the desperate resolution they had taken never before heard of; and therefore that they would not run into the jaws of lions to be inevitably torn to pieces. As much mortified and confounded as MAC GILLY-PATRICK must have been, not to be able to give battle to such a handful of men so weakened, and with such a numerous army as he led against them to support his challenge, yet all his efforts to persuade or provoke his men to make the attack were vain
and

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and fruitless; and he was obliged to submit to a disgrace, which was the more insupportable as it had never been known before in the history of any age among that warlike people.

When the Dalgais had stood to their arms long enough to be convinced that the enemy durst not join battle with them, and that they were retiring out of the field, DONOGH proceeded on his march homeward; and the King of Offory contented himself with harrassing them by frequent skirmishes with the rear. It was impossible these should not happen; but the skill and caution of the Momonian Prince in making good his retreat was so admirable, that in a march of above forty miles he lost but a hundred and fifty of his tribe when they reached their native country. Having thus brought them home from the famous battle of Clontarfe, and having shewed the difficulties and dangers which they had to encounter on the one side, and the skill and intrepidity with which they surmounted them on the other, I must now leave these illustrious Dalgais in the enjoyment of that repose and glory which were their due, and pursue the thread of the history.

MALA. II.
A. D. 1014.

When the untimely fate of the Monarch BRIAN was known over the island, the states of the kingdom assembled to elect a successor: and though none of them would lend their assistance to preserve MALACHY on the throne against the united voice of the people in favour of BRIAN, yet they all concurred in restoring him to it. Whether they were willing to prevent any further intrusion of the provincial Kings, and to bring back their constitution to its old principles of choosing a Monarch of the Heremonian line, or whether MALACHY had soothed them with fair promises of activity in the service of his country after the great example of BRIAN, or whether both these circumstances might not concur to influence the election, from the silence of all the historians is not to be known. But on the other hand, it does not appear from any thing that has been related, that he had merited this restoration. He had sat quietly under his deposal, it is true, without attempting to disturb the public peace: but the public peace was so well secured by the valour, the good conduct, and the great popularity of the renowned BRIAN, that any attempt to disturb it by MALACHY must have

have ended in his own destruction. Reasons of safety therefore to himself, and not reasons of affection to the public good, swayed the mind of the King of Meath to this peaceful demeanour under his just disgrace. I call it just, because let BRIAN's intrusion, who was of the Heberian line, have what hard name it may, yet when a Prince gives himself up to sloth and dissipation, and abandons the care and interests of his people to the rage and cruelty of an enemy—as he did—in a country too especially where the Monarch had the sole administration of government and was to do every thing in it himself, the people have a right to take care of themselves, to divest him of the power he so infamously abuses, and to confer it upon another who will be the guardian of their rights and liberties. This is not indeed the slavish doctrine of passive obedience so absurdly and so wickedly founded from our pulpits in the last century, but it is the doctrine of religion, of reason, and of common sense.

It is evident by the King of Meath's withdrawing with his battalions just at the moment the two armies joined in battle, though he marched with them under the name of an ally to the Irish Monarch, that he took the first opportunity he could take with safety of shewing his resentment and disobedience: for he apprehended doubtless that by this perfidy in such a crisis, he should throw the army of BRIAN into confusion, and give the victory to his enemy. His not attempting any thing therefore against the public peace whilst this Monarch was on the throne, was not, as I have said, any merit in him, and from any regard to the public, and therefore without other reasons did not entitle him to a restoration. Restored however he was with the general consent of the states of the kingdom, at least to outward appearance: and to give them a taste of his new zeal and activity, and that the example of his predecessor might not be a fresh reproach to him, he soon after marched to Dublin, in order to chastize the rebellious Danes who had survived the battle of Clontarfe: and this he did very effectually, by destroying all the inhabitants, giving their effects up to the plunder of his soldiers, and then burning the city. This is a chastisement which the Danes seem to have brought upon themselves very deservedly; who had lived in so much ease and tranquillity under BRIAN's government, encouraged in their commerce and protected in their property, and yet who took the first opportunity

MALA. II. tunity to join his enemies against him. Though MALACHY therefore stood neuter in this rebellion, yet he considered the Danes, it may be supposed, as highly criminal; and perhaps to atone in some measure for his own base neutrality, as well as to avenge the cause of his predecessor whom he found every where lamented, he took these speedy measures in order to contribute to their final overthrow.

But what the people in the territory of Wexford had done to offend him we are not informed. We are only told, that immediately after he had burnt the city of Dublin, he marched into that country which he destroyed with fire and sword in a very dreadful manner. These people were inhabitants of the province of Leinster; and though they did not first propose the expulsion of MALACHY from the throne, yet as they did not rise in his defence, he might perhaps take this revenge on that account. But then the same revenge was due to all the other provinces: and the next thing we are informed of is, that he marched with a great army into Ulster, and when he had plundered the country, made slaves of many of the inhabitants; or, as it is said by another writer, brought away many hostages. No reason is given, nor any conjecture offered for these hostilities: and if it was not in revenge for the part which the people of these countries took in his expulsion, or against his restoration, that he harassed them in this manner, it must be imputed to that anarchy and confusion which upon the death of BRIAN broke out almost over the whole island. The illustrious example of that Monarch, his care of the public peace and the public interest, and the constant success with which his arms had been crowned against all his enemies, had through love or through fear restrained all the chiefs from their intestine feuds, and preserved the island in a tranquillity it had never known through so many years before. But this restraint being taken off unhappily by his death, the usual ferment was rekindled; and it blazed out perhaps with greater violence because it had been so long smothered.

Be this however as it might; nothing is to be met with of that time but bitter woe for the loss of their last Monarch, and discontent and disobedience under the present government; chiefs warring against chiefs for family quarrels

quarrels and trifles, and MALACHY revenging the revolt of some territories with all the rage and cruelty of a licentious conqueror. Thus the King of the province of Leinster, and many of his nobility, assembled in one of their palaces, or, as others say, in the streets of Leighlin, were barbarously murdered by the King of Ossory; and he in return had his territories invaded and laid waste by the Monarch, and with many of his subjects was himself put to the sword. The remainder of the Danes too, taking advantage of these commotions, made an attempt to overthrow the succeeding King of Leinster: but though he fell under this attempt, and many of his subjects were killed or plundered, yet the Danes were so thoroughly defeated by his successor, that from this time they were never able to make head against the Irish; and the Danish interest, which had cost so many thousand lives to establish, was finally extinguished in that unhappy kingdom. The merit of this action however did not secure the King of Linster from the malice and animosity of one of his family, by whom his house and he himself were burned. In the midst of these disturbances of the public peace, and notwithstanding the affections of the Kings and people were much estranged from MALACHY, yet he descended to his grave by a natural death. It is less extraordinary that he should have the character of a Prince of exemplary goodness and devotion during his last reign, when he repaired churches and monasteries, and re-established the public schools that were destroyed in these civil wars. With this second reign of MALACHY, and the final extinction of the Danish power, the monarchy of Ireland may be said to fail: for though several petty Kings assumed the title of Monarchs, and had some share of the power among their several factions, yet properly speaking there was no absolute Monarch elected as usual by all the states, and to which all the provinces submitted in the accustomed manner. An interregnum however of seventy two years ensued, before any Monarch of the Heremonian line mounted the throne even in this divided state of it: and therefore as a new scene of government is now opening, it will be proper to reserve it for another book. The death of the last Monarch who swayed the sceptre over Ireland, and the total extermination of the Danes and Normans in that kingdom, will as properly likewise make a conclusion of this book; which does more honour to

MALA. II.

MALA. II. Ireland, through the illustrious merit of the renowned BRIAN, than any other book in its ancient history. But as all this glory was overfet by a spirit of faction, which split the nation into parties on the different fides of those who contended for the ruling power, so this should teach us to take warning by their example, that we do not hazard the public happiness in foolishly abetting those, who, regardless of the public good, are wicked enough to drive us into factions for their own private ends.



T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

I R E L A N D.

B O O K XI.

ON the death of of MALACHY, the whole Irish nation, which had been for some time before much altered from the state in which BRIAN left it, was thrown into the most violent and passionate contests about the succession to the monarchy. After comparing all the writers of this æra, and the several events that they have handed down, it appears to me that DONOGH made some attempts to succeede his father in the throne, as soon as he returned with his army from the battle of Clontarfe, and had made away with his brother ; and that then it was that the rumour of his being concerned in the murder of TEIG had incensed all the states of the kingdom against DONOGH, and prevented his election to the monarchy. Finding his own tribe of the Dalgais so much reduced by the late battle ; that the step which his mad ambition prompted, had been the principal cause to

WARE.
LYNCH.
CAMDEN.
O FLAHER.
KEATING.
RAYMOND.
HARRIS.
Dissertat.
H. ENG.
MS.

DONO. III.

prevent his success; and therefore, that all opposition was now in vain, he left the kingdom; and with a few of the Dalgais who still adhered to him repaired as soldiers of fortune to Germany, where they were kindly entertained by the Emperor, who made the Irish Prince his General against the northern Heathens. After great success in that command, and being much honoured by the Emperor for it, they returned again to their native country, where DONOGH found himself but ill received; and that the insidious death of his elder brother, in which he was known to have had a hand, was not yet forgotten by those who had a pious regard for the memory of their father BRIAN. By some means or other however, either by tokens of great repentance, or because of the vast renown he had acquired in arms, the inhabitants in his own province were reconciled to him: they submitted to his government, and assisted him to recover the submission and the tribute that had usually been paid by others to the Kings of Munster. In this account, the reader is freed from those ambiguities and contradictions which have not a little perplexed the writer; and if it is not the true one, it is at least the most probable he could discover.

DONOGH the King of Munster having thus established himself in his own province, as soon as MALACHY was dead, asserted his right to the throne of Ireland as the son of BRIAN. The right of BRIAN himself, it must be remembered, was not a right of succession, but a right acquired by popularity and some degree of force: and therefore this pretension of his son's, who was far from being popular, had nothing but force and faction to support it. These however enabled him to make a show of sovereignty and to assume the title of Monarch; and by these he got himself acknowledged and submitted to as such over all Leth Mogha—the southern half of the kingdom—and in the greatest part of the territories of the other half. But in opposition to him, a strong party was formed by DERMOT MAC MAL-NAMBO the provincial King of Leinster, and nephew to DONOGH, in favour of his cousin TURLOGH, a son of TEIG before-mentioned who had been murdered: and this Prince assumed also the title of Monarch of Ireland, and was acknowledged as such by the faction who supported him. The government being thus divided between two pretenders, some historians take notice of CUAN O LOCHAIN being appointed administrator of Ireland, without

without explaining how, or by what authority, such a new unheard of office was erected. O FLAHERTY however says, that he died in the following year; and that this administrator, who was their most eminent poet and historian, exercised little or no authority beyond the bounds of Meath. WARE is very deficient and inaccurate in his whole account of the monarchy from the death of MALACHY: as no light is given us of this transaction by any writer, there seems no other way of accounting for it, if it was true, than by supposing that the people of that country who were attached to their succession in the Heremonian line, and took part with neither of these pretenders to the monarchy who were of another family, put their affairs under the management of this able man, till the constitution should recover itself, and place a Monarch of the right line upon the throne.

But this, which is only my own conjecture, seems confirmed by what follows in the history; that DONOGH having raised a great army of the Momonians marched with them into Meath, preyed all that country; as well as a great part of Leinster and Ossory, encamped for two days near the walls of Dublin, and brought hostages from them all for their submission. This is the first act we are informed of in his reign; and it seems occasioned by the transaction above-mentioned, and by the opposition given him by the King of Leinster, who had set up TURLOGH as his rival. In return however for this depredation, they raised all their strength in Leinster, and being joined by some of the Momonians, who had revolted against DONOGH, carried hostilities into Munster. Among other ravages which they committed, they plundered, sacked, and burned the city of Waterford; from whence they brought away many prisoners and a great number of cattle. On the same side the King of Breffwy made an attack upon DONOGH by sea and land; but, notwithstanding his success at first, he himself with most of his army were slaughtered by the Monarch; who with one ship only fought his fleet likewise, and sunk and took fourteen vessels of Breffwy.

In this sort of devastations committed by both parties, as each had the power of committing them, were the rights and liberties, the lives and properties, of the poor people of Ireland taken away: and in a series of forty years which these outrages continued, it is no wonder that the nation should

DONO. III. should lose all the polity, the improvements, and good manners, that had been restored by BRIAN ; and that they should be returning apace to that ignorance, anarchy, and licentiousness, which the Danish wars had introduced. To recite the particular actions of the two contending parties could afford the reader no pleasure, nor could it be of any other use than to teach us, what may be learnt from the general account already given, how necessary it is for a state possessing liberty to guard against a tumultuary and factious abuse of it, lest it end, as it did with these unhappy people, in its destruction.

The faction of the King of Leinster and the Monarch TURLOUGH whom he had set up, and with whom in a manner he partook of the sovereign power that the other had, grew at last to be superior to that of DONOGH. In particular they devastated Munster so much, that the inhabitants forsook their King, and gave hostages to the other Monarch for their future loyalty. By this distress the great mind of DONOGH seems to have been subdued ; and yet his ambition had not subsided with his years. He had known what it was to be obliged to leave his country and to seek his fortune abroad ; but he was then in the prime of life. He had the mortification now in his old age to be obliged to flee from his dominions for his safety ; his enemy having got the upperhand, and all his friends having forsook him. Some of the historians say, in order to save his credit, that he undertook a pilgrimage to Rome that he might wipe off the stain of his brothers blood, by his Holiness's absolution, and his own repentance. But the truth is, that he went to Rome with no such penitential views ; he had placed his hopes in the Pope's authority to restore him to the power which both his friends and enemies had deprived him of : and for this purpose he carried the crown of Ireland with him, which he laid at his Holiness's feet ; promising to subject to him a kingdom, which for two thousand years had acknowledged no other jurisdiction, civil or ecclesiastical, but that of its own Monarchs and its own laws and constitution. As solicitous as the court of Rome was to extend its power in those days, nothing however was done in consequence of the submission of this exiled Prince. The people of Ireland were too much agitated with their domestic factions to hearken to any pretensions of a foreign power : but this mere possession of the crown of Ireland by the

Pope, hath been set forth very pompously by some writers, as an authority for the donation of that kingdom by ADRIAN to our HENRY the second; with what reason let the reader himself determine. DONOGH finding at last that this resource had failed him, and that there was no chance of re-ascending the throne of Ireland, made a virtue of necessity, took the habit of a religious in St. Stephen's Abbey at Rome, and spent the rest of his days in the exercises of devotion.

DONO. III.

On DONOGH's quitting the kingdom, TURLOGH was left without any competitor; and though never elected to the monarchy, nor submitted to nor acknowledged by the states of the island in due form, yet with the aid and association of his cousin DERMOD the King of Leinster, he from this time assumed the sovereign power; no other Prince opposing his title nor refusing to pay the usual tribute. Indeed MORTOGH the son of DONOGH, a very valiant Prince, made a shew at first of disputing with him the crown of Munster; but they soon quelled that insurrection, received hostages again from that province, chased MORTOGH into Connaught, and reduced the King of it to such straits for giving him shelter, that he was at last obliged to buy his peace at the pleasure of the reigning Monarch, and his ally the King of Leinster. The latter notwithstanding all his great success in driving away his uncle, and placing his cousin upon the throne, was at last defeated and slain in battle by CONNOR the King of Meath; whose territories he had wasted several times with great cruelty, making no discrimination between things sacred and profane.

TURLOGH.
A. D. 1064.

A much better character is given of TURLOGH whom he had advanced: for though he always had a numerous army on foot to keep his subjects in awe, yet after the death of DERMOD he never made use of his power against any of them; and they, on their side, were contented to give him no disturbance. He seems to have imitated the example of his grandfather BRIAN, as far as the distractions of the time would suffer him, in establishing good laws, in punishing the transgressors, and in protecting and rewarding merit. Archbishop USHER has printed a collection of Letters wrote in latin, which passed between the Kings of Ireland, and the Archbishops of Canterbury and Dublin in this age: amongst which is a letter from LANFRANK the
English

TURLOGH. English Primate to TURLOGH, whom he styles the magnificent King of Ireland, and that does him so much honour as to deserve a copy in this work [a]. No other account is necessary to be given of this Monarch, in order to shew that he was worthy of his great descent, and of the throne he filled. At all times to fill it with glory to themselves and happiness to their people, where the power of the Monarch was so circumscribed, and that of the provincial Kings and petty Princes so great, was extremely difficult. But at this time, when the nation was torn to pieces with faction in a very extraordinary manner, his own title denied by the greatest part of the people though acquiesced in by all, no election made of him by the states of the kingdom, and of course no inauguration of him having been performed, under these circumstances to govern a people, free even to licentiousness, with popularity or approbation, was a task too arduous for any man, whose heart was not good, and whose understanding was not excellent.

In the reign of this Irish Prince, WILLIAM the second, surnamed Rufus, was on the throne of England; who, hearing a great character of the Irish oak, sent a messenger to TURLOGH to desire that he might be furnished with a sufficient quantity for the roof of Westminster-hall that was then building; and his request was gratified. Though I have not met with any English historian who mentions this circumstance, and have been told there is no Irish oak used about that edifice—the truth of which I know nothing of, nor whether it can be ascertained—yet the fact may be as it is related. Towards the latter end of his reign, which lasted two and twenty years, TURLOGH was much afflicted with a very painful languishing distemper, which he sustained with a becoming patience and resignation for several years, till

[a] “ That God has bestowed his blessing upon the kingdom of Ireland, when he raised your excellency to the regal dignity of that kingdom, is evident to every considering person: for so many are the great things which our brother and fellow-bishop PATRICK hath reported concerning your pious condescension to good men, your strict justice in punishing vice, and your manifest equity to all your subjects, that though I have not seen you, I love you as if I had.”—Usserii Sylloge Epistol. Hibern. p. 71. I saw a copy of this book in the college library, with many notes and explanations in the margin in the Primate’s own hand writing.

death released from it at the age of seventy-seven. Heroic deeds of valour are most apt to catch the attention of the reader, and to acquire his applause and affection; and those have not been wanting in TURLOGH's history: but a legislator who consults the happiness of his state, by devising good laws for its safety and prosperity, and by attending carefully to their execution,—a thing scandalously neglected by English magistrates—is a much better man, and a more useful citizen, than the destroyer of mankind at the head of an army: and yet the one acquires glory, and the other at most a silent approbation.

The death of TURLOGH proved another occasion for faction to rear its head over the Irish nation: in supporting the different claims of MORTOGH the son of TURLOGH, and DONALD O LOCHLIN, of the old Heremonian line: the one under the sanction of the new constitution, which had introduced the provincial Kings in the person of BRIAN his great ancestor, so long, and, as it was pretended, so unjustly excluded from the monarchy; and the other, claiming a long prescriptive right of succession for many ages in the royal Hy-Niall family, of which he was the head. In contests of this nature, the most powerful army, or the greatest interest in the state, which is much the same, and not the constitution, is generally the last resort. Many instances of this occur in our own history; and even our Parliaments, which ought sacredly to guard the constitution—but if ever it is destroyed, will be the destroyers of it—have voted some Monarchs in, and others out, on the same principle. In Ireland, the constitution was not prostituted so freely; as barbarous a nation as we affect to call it, long after the period in which our own parliaments paid no regard to right and justice. The order of succession in the Heremonian line had been broken in upon but once in above a thousand years: and had not that interruption been permitted, the fatal contests for the monarchy since the death of BRIAN, which had well nigh devastated the country, and did really in their effects dissolve the constitution and destroy their liberties, might never have had a being.

MORTO. II.
and
DONALD V.
A. D. 1094.

Many writers take no notice of the monarchical power claimed and exercised by DONALD, and call MORTOGH the proper successor to TUR-

MORTO. III.
and
DONALD V.

LOGH, in the throne of Ireland. Of this number is WARE and KEATING; but we are told by the best authorities, that the first of these Princes, who was likewise King of TIRCONNELL, according to the famous Division of Leth Con and Loth Mogha, formerly mentioned, had the sovereign command of the Northern, and the last of the southern half of the Kingdom. Though much blood must have been shed before this division could take place, yet a divided monarchy—if it may be called so—contented neither; and in a struggle for the whole, which lasted twenty years, the people were ground between them. It would only shock our humanity to recite the several particulars of this bloody contest, in which sometimes the one, and sometimes the other party prevailed; but always to the disadvantage of the country and its inhabitants. Every year almost produced a cessation of arms, by the intervention of the prelates and other patriots, who endeavoured to reconcile their jarring interests; but it was all in vain; every year almost produced the same spoil and plunder, the same devastation of lands and houses, and the same bloody battles. A very instructive lesson this to a free people, not to enter into the designs of men of factious spirits, under the deceitful notion that the decision of the contest will soon be made, and that the first victory on either side, will compose the troubled waters; which are generally turned into a sea of blood.

Whether it was from a real regard to the interest of the Church, as the historians say, or out of policy to secure the affections of the clergy, it is impossible for us to say, but certain it is, that MORTOGH alienated the Church of Cashel from the Kings of Munster, and appropriated it for ever to the Archbishop's See. The book of reigns in the Irish language, gives a large account of this Monarch, and represents him as a good and godly Prince, who made a great progress in restoring the Church and State to their former splendor, in rebuilding some, and endowing other churches and monasteries with lands. Very little of this kind could be done, I think, amidst the distractions in which the kingdom was involved during his reign; he might have the will, but he could not have the power, to do much in this way to any effect. Three national synods, or one synod continued by prorogation at different times, it is said, were summoned

summoned by this Prince : of which some account will be given towards the close of the book. WILLIAM of Malmſbury, and from him WARE has ſaid, “ that our HENRY the Firſt had MORTOGH and his ſucceſſors ſo much at his devotion, that they would not write nor do any thing without his approbation ; though it was reported that MORTOGH, for what cauſe was not known, had for ſome time carried himſelf more high than uſual towards the Engliſh, but upon the interdicting of ſhipping and commerce, he ſoon grew milder.” No notice is taken of any ſuch intercourſe as this between the Monarchs of that age, by any Iriſh writer ; neither are there any traces of treaties of commerce between this nation and that, in their whole hiſtory ; but yet, questionable as it is, I do not determine againſt the fact.

MORTO. III.
and
DONALD V.

In the ſame collection of letters, publiſhed by UſHER abovementioned, there is one from ANSELM, Archbiſhop of Canterbury, with this addreſs ; “ To MORTOGH, by the Grace of GOD, the glorious King of Ireland, ANSELM, ſervant of the church of Canterbury, &c. [a] The letter which is given below, ſhews at leaſt that this Prince governed the half of the kingdom that was allotted to him, with peace and reputation ; and that his fame was not confined to his own country. As another proof of this, we are told in the chronicles of the Iſle of Man, as they are given us by CAMDEN, that upon a vacancy of their government, or rather during the minority of the next heir, “ the Nobility of that iſle diſpatched ambaffadors to MORTOGH O BRIAN, King of Ireland, deſiring that he would ſend them ſome diligent man or other, of royal extraction to rule over, them, during the minority of OLAVE, the ſon of their late ſovereign. The King readily conſented, and ſent DONALD, the ſon of TEIG, with orders and inſtructions to govern the kingdom, though it belonged not to him, with modeſty and tenderneſs. But as ſoon as he was advanced to the throne, he behaved with ſo much cruelty, that at the end of three years he was baniſhed.”

[a] “ I give thanks to GOD for the many good things that are reported of your Highneſs ; particularly that you govern your kingdom in ſo much peace, that all good men who hear thereof, return their thanks to God, and with a long continuance of your life, &c.” Uſſerii Sylloge epiſtol. Hibern. p. 93.

MORTO.III.
and
DONALD V.

A ridiculous story is told in the same annals, and copied by WARE and KEATING, of a MAGNUS, King of Norway, sending a messenger to MORTOGH, with his shoes, which he commanded him to carry on his shoulders through his house on Christmas-day, as a testimony of his subjection, and of the King of Ireland's complying with this indignity. I have called the story ridiculous, because it appears so at first sight: it is moreover incredible, that a Prince of MORTOGH's descent, intrepidity, and power in the southern half of Ireland, who was continually in arms against the Monarch of the other half, should so tamely yield to such an ignominious subjection to a King of Norway, with whom he had never had any connexion or dispute: neither is it at all likely that a King of Norway should send an ambassage to MORTOGH on such an insolent errand. The other story which follows, still further confirms the incredibility of the last: it is said, that MAGNUS was not content with this abject submission of the King of Ireland, but fitted out a numerous fleet manned with Danes and Normans, in order to plunder and destroy his country. As soon as the Northern King and his nobility, and some of the soldiers, from the first ships were landed, the Irish army who were in ambush, were so well prepared to receive them, that the invaders were every one cut to pieces; which the rest of the fleet observing, they immediately tacked about and returned home.

Towards the latter end of this divided Monarchy between MORTOGH and DONALD, the young King of Conaught, called TURLOGH the Great, grew extremely troublesome to them both. He was a Prince of the Heremonian line, of a warlike intrepid spirit, and of many private virtues. With this disposition, and this character, it was no difficult thing for him to take advantage of the dissensions which then prevailed. Whether he wrested all power out of the hands of MORTOGH, as some writers say, or whether a languishing disease, under which he laboured for some years, inclined that King to relinquish the cares of a government which had been always extremely troublesome, as others say, it is impossible for us to determine. It is not improbable, that both may be in the right. Be this however as it might, he retired about two years before his death to
the

the monastery of Lismore, and after a short stay in that place, took the habit of a monk at Ardmagh, where he ended his days in quiet; but the place of his interment is much disputed. In the British Chronicles which speak of his death, he is stiled, “the most great and worthy King of all Ireland;” and in the annals of Leighlin, it is said of him, “MORTOGH, the most serene Prince, faithful to his allies, formidable to his enemies, bountiful to strangers, who for his piety and justice above all other Princes, deserved the love of his subjects, died and was buried at Ferns.”

MORTO. III.
and
DONALD V.

On the death of MORTOGH, his rival did not acquire, as he perhaps expected, any addition to his former authority: even that was much disputed by TURLOGH, as it had been before. But DONALD made a shift to preserve it till his death, which was two years after that of MORTOGH. It must be observed, however, that this is a period in the history, attended with great confusion, from the different accounts of the different writers; which I have not been able to reconcile. Indeed it happens to be a point of no great consequence, whether the former survived the latter two years or six; whether TURLOGH had any share of the government of the southern division, or, notwithstanding all the insurrections which he occasioned, was only King of Conaught as before; and whether on the death of DONALD an interregnum of fifteen years succeeded, or TURLOGH assumed the title, and was in fact acknowledged King of Ireland by the majority of the people, immediately on his demise. Such, and so various, are the accounts that we meet with of this time! But with regard to the circumstance of the interregnum, which is the most material, and mentioned only by WARE, and by him very doubtfully, it may be determined, I think, from LYNCH, and Mr. O CONNOR, that no Prince, on the death of DONALD, was found able to contend with TURLOGH, who was owned King of Ireland by the greatest part of the nation.

DONALD V.

A. D. 1119.

It must be owned, it seems incredible in itself, if we had not their authority to direct us, that a Prince so warlike in his temper, so powerful in the field, and so formidable to the two departed Kings, as TURLOGH was, should not seize the vacant throne of the whole kingdom immediately, but wait fifteen years, when there was no competitor, before

TURLO. II.

A. D. 1121.

TURLO. II. fore he assumed the title of Monarch of Ireland. It is possible it might be fifteen years before he had so far subdued the several chiefs who opposed him, as to get himself acknowledged by the greatest part of the people; and to that period some writers may have given the name of an inter-regnum. But there can be no doubt, I think, of his assuming the title of King, as soon as DONALD was dead, and grasping at the sovereign power of the whole island, for which he had contended, and in a great measure succeeded, during his life.

In the life of DONALD, and even of MORTOGH, I believe it was—for the time is not ascertained by any writer—the province of Munster was invaded by him, and plundered with great hostility: and though a Prince of the house of BRIAN attacked him in his retreat, and defeated and broke his army with a terrible slaughter, yet soon recovering this loss, he invaded it a second time by sea and land; marching himself at the head of his army, and committing inexpressible barbarities upon the people, till he came to Corke; where his fleet, which had obeyed his orders in spoiling and ravaging all the coasts, met him according to his appointment: and together they reduced the province so much under his obedience, that, taking hostages for their submission and future homage, he committed the government of the North division to CONNOR O BRIAN, and that of the Southern to DONOGH MAC CARTHY, of the same royal house. In short, all the provinces of the island were each in their turn invaded and harrassed by this King of Conaught, while the throne was filled by the two Princes abovementioned: and he would scarcely therefore sit still when it was vacated by their death, without making an effectual struggle to place himself upon it.

No Monarch was inaugurated, nor elected by the states of the kingdom—as it hath been observed—since the reign of MALACHY; but he, as well as some others, had powerful factions, which got their authority submitted to over the greatest part of the island. But the same Chiefs which joined their force and interest to set them up, very often joined to oppose them, as their passions and private advantages directed. This conduct however was not peculiar to those people: our own history
abounds

abounds with instances of this sort ; and the source of it is to be sought TURLO. II. for, not in particular climates and constitutions of government, but in human nature. No Prince experienced more these contradictory measures of opposition than TURLOUGH did, and no Prince ever defeated them with more success.

The Kings of Munster, of the house of BRIAN, between whom he had divided the government of that province, having quarrelled amongst themselves, and stirred up their factions against each other, TURLOUGH raised a powerful army, and a third time invaded it. But when he was advanced as far as the plains of Moin-morè, he was met by TURLOUGH O BRIAN, at the head of three battalions of the Momonians—which WALSH interprets nine thousand—where the illustrious tribe of the Dalgais received such a defeat, as they had never known before. Other writers call them but three thousand, and perhaps with more probability : for since the death of MORTOGH, the Eugenians had not only separated from them, but the Dalgais themselves were much divided through the different pretensions of their rival Princes. The defeat in this battle ended with the banishment of TURLOUGH O BRIAN, and another division of the province of Munster by the Monarch. The dissensions of this royal family, brother setting up against brother, and each having a separate faction at their command, broke the force of the Dalgais in pieces, which when united, nothing could overthrow ; and so prepared the way for the revolution that was to follow.

Amidst all the opposition made to TURLOUGH by the several Princes and Chiefs at different times, he not only stood his ground, but he generally subdued them. DERMÔD the King of Leinster, who was so greatly instrumental in the catastrophe of his country, was one of those whom the Monarch frequently chastized : indeed all the provinces felt the weight of his power and resentment in their turn. He made his own son King of Meath, of Dublin, and some other parts of Leinster : with his army he destroyed the country of Tirconnell, and with his navy he laid waste the territories of Tyrone ; both under the government of MORTOGH, O Lachlin Prince of the north hy-Niall. Here however his resentment was carried further than

TURLO. II. than he could support; and this Prince, who was of the family of the last Monarch DONALD, became a rival too powerful for him to vanquish. It is said by some writers, that the glory of TURLOGH was so much obscured and his power humbled by this MORTOGH who was of the old Heremonian line, that he obliged the Monarch to give him hostages as a security for his peaceableness even six years before he died. But however this might be, it is certain that they attacked one another several times with various success by sea and land; and that MORTOGH had procured, besides the remains of the Normans, the naval power of Scotland to aid him against the Monarch.

But this contest was concluded by the death of TURLOGH; who having left almost all his personal estate to the clergy, to be divided in just proportions according to their several orders, hath had the character of dying a penitent and making a religious exit. Indeed if all that is said of him by LYNCH is true—which gave him the title of “TURLOGH the great”—he appears to have been a better man than from any thing that has yet been related of him. The distraction of the times, and the continual opposition made to him by one Prince or other would not permit many great things to be done by him: but he built the three chief bridges in the province of Conaught; he completed the cathedral of Tuam; he built a hospital there and endowed it with a fair estate; he settled a stipend on the professor of divinity at Ardmagh; and he was so severe and inflexible in his punishment of delinquents, that having imprisoned his own son for some great offence, he rejected the application of many Princes and prelates in his favour; and even at the end of a year was with great difficulty, and not without the intercession of five hundred Priests, eleven Bishops, and the two Archbishops of Ardmagh and Cashel, prevailed upon to set him at liberty. Besides many donations to the clergy of Tuam, and a great number of silver crosses, chalices, and goblets, he gave to several churches and religious houses by his will—as it hath been mentioned—all the costly furniture of his houses, his gold and silver vases, his gems and jewels, his plate, his horses, arms, and all his military equipage, his herds of cattle, together with sixty marks of silver, and sixty five ounces of gold.

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How the contest between him and the Prince of the North Hy-niall might have ended, if TURLOGH had lived a little longer, it is impossible for us to know: but his death delivered up to his rival MORTOGH O Lachlin the greatest part of the sovereignty of the island. The foundation of this grandeur was laid without doubt designedly in the opposition which he gave to TURLOGH; and RODERIC the young King of Conaught, son of the latter, was the only Prince of any note who was able to dispute his authority, or to give him any disturbance. He did both for some time to a great degree: he invaded the Monarch's own territory of Tyrone, burnt a fruitful peninsula there called Inis-owen, destroyed all its fine gardens, orchards and plantations, and ravaged the whole country in a very hostile manner. In the same manner he made incursions into the province of Munster, taking hostages for their submission, as his father had done before: the next year he over-ran the province of Leinster, receiving hostages from some of the petty Princes, and putting one of them in irons; at the same time that his fleet ravaged the coast of Tyrone. In a short time after he fell violently on the territory of Meath; and compelling the inhabitants to give him pledges placed two governors over them. The reader is not to imagine that MORTOGH sat quiet all this time, without exercising the power which he had acquired with his authority. I meant only to give him a view of RODERIC's transactions, 'till he was reduced by force and stratagem, without the interposition of any other event.

MORTO. IV.
A. D. 1156.

Indeed MORTOGH was so far from being an indolent inactive Prince after he assumed the title of Monarch, that he retained his warlike disposition to the end of his days. Not a province in Ireland, scarce any considerable territory, escaped his visitation with the royal army: and in a continued course of victories, obtained partly by battles and partly by the terror of his name, he subdued them all. Even RODERIC was obliged to make his peace by delivering up four hostages, and accepting his own entire province of Conaught, and the one half of Meath; which he sold to the King of that territory for an hundred ounces of gold. In this manner did MORTOGH become King and Monarch of Ireland, in as ample a manner except the ceremony of election and inauguration, as any of his predecessors since the

MORTO. IV. reign of NIALL the great. But yet he wanted the skill or power, or perhaps only a right conjuncture of the times—which in political affairs is sometimes every thing—to get a law made in favour of his family, and to establish a new race of Hy-niall monarchs by hereditary right. Could he have succeeded in such a plan he certainly would have attempted it; and for want of it the constitution was drawing apace to its dissolution. But the ecclesiastical state of Ireland received a considerable alteration in this Monarch's reign, in a synod which he called at Kells in the county of Meath; of which an account shall be given in its proper place.

The entire sovereign power had not long been vested in MORTOGH, before his own impetuous temper, or the ill advice of his friends, or perhaps both, persuaded him to abuse it. On a slight affront given him by a Prince of the territory of Ulad in the province of Ulster, the Monarch entered his country in a very hostile manner, took many of his vassals prisoners and put them into fetters as slaves: and notwithstanding a peace was made between him and the Prince, on the mediation of the Primate and the King of Orgiall, of which they were both the guarantees, and which the Monarch himself took a solemn oath to observe, yet he soon caused the Prince's eyes to be put out, and three of his chiefs to be assassinated. Enraged at a perfidy so notorious and diabolical, the King of Orgial who had been his surety, levied all the troops he could, marched directly to his palace in the county of Tyrone, fought the few tumultuary forces which MORTOGH could collect on such a surprise, defeated, and killed him.

RODERIC.
A. D. 1166

The death of this Monarch gave an opportunity to RODERIC, King of Conaught and son of TURLOGH the great, who was the only rival of MORTOGH in the first years of his reign, to assume the sovereignty of the whole island. The power which he had in his own province, the interest of his family, the reputation which he had acquired in arms, and above all the conjuncture of the times which produced no other rival, made his accession easy and uncontested. The states of the kingdom were assembled by him at Dublin the capital of the Normans, almost the only seat of the little power they had left in Ireland, where he was unanimously elected. But many of those states brought their voices for him thither without bringing their hearts: they

they gave way to a power which they could not resist: they even contended by a factious species of loyalty, who should be most forward in the support of the new Monarch. RODERIC therefore was inaugurated, and his right of sovereignty recognised, with all the solemnities that had been observed towards any of his predecessors; and which from the time of BRIAN had been refused.

RODERIC.

Notwithstanding this promising appearance of unanimity, which the Monarch from his own experience might have reason to suspect, he made a sort of progress, or rather a march, almost round the island at the head of his troops, in the first year of his reign; taking hostages from the several Princes, and making them presents in return. It was not long however before several of them revolted, and laid him under the necessity of chastizing them into submission. The territories of Tyrone under the Hy-niall Princes, were visited by him at the head of a vast army and in conjunction with a numerous fleet; and at the end of four days were glad to buy their peace with a submission and delivering up hostages to secure it. In the same year he held a Parliament or general assembly of the states of the kingdom at Athboy in the county of Meath, such as was usually held at Tara—and it was the last that was ever held under the Milesian monarchs—where besides the peculiar trains of the provincial Kings, the petty Princes and chiefs, and of three Archbishops, thirteen thousand horse, it is said, were counted at it.

About the same time DERMOD the King of Leinster, who had long had an intrigue with the wife of TIGHERNAN O ROURK the King of Breffny, having had notice from the lady that her husband was going on a pilgrimage to St. PATRICK's purgatory, when it would be easy for him to carry her off by force or stratagem, obeyed her summons with great joy. Many accidents had prevented the accomplishment of their desires hitherto; and in order to prevent any more, in this favourable opportunity of TIGHERNAN's absence, the Queen of Breffny had appointed the time and place of delivering herself up into the arms of her lover. Such a lady, we may be sure, was true to her assignation; and to save appearances of decency to the world, when DERMOD caught her in his arms and mounted her behind an officer of a

RODERIC.

party of horse which he had brought with him, she cried out for help as if the King of Leinster was carrying her away against her will. When TIGHERNAN returned from his pilgrimage, and learnt the story of the violence done to his wife, as it then appeared, he applied to the Monarch for his assistance. RODERIC thought the cause of resentment was so just, that he aided the King of Breffny with his authority and with some of his troops. These, together with his own forces, those of Meath and Ossory, and even some in Leinster who revolted, enabled him to march to the place of DERMOD's residence; who being unprepared for such an attack, was obliged to flee his country and even the kingdom: and to this amour, and the revenge taken of it, was entirely owing the dissolution of their monarchy.

The King of Leinster had by many instances of impolitic and tyrannical government lost the affections of his people; and therefore when he applied to them, on notice of the preparations making against him, to assist him in a distress which his own injustice had brought upon him, their resentment against him was so violent that all his Princes and chiefs renounced his authority, and put themselves under the protection of the Monarch. DERMOD being thus obliged to become an exile, or to be delivered up to his enemies, chose the former; and giving a full loose to his passions determined to punish his rebellious nobility at all hazards, though the happiness of his country was to be sacrificed in the attempt. Passing over therefore to Bristol, with about sixty of his friends, and hearing there that the King of England was then in France pursuing his conquests in that country, the King of Leinster repaired thither to implore his aid. HENRY the second, an aspiring and ambitious Monarch, who thought "the whole world was little enough for the dominion of one sovereign," had for some time cast an eye towards Ireland as a desirable acquisition, when he should be at leisure to turn his arms against it. He was not however at present in that conjuncture: and therefore that he might not entirely miss the occasion which this application of DERMOD gave him, he lent a favourable ear to it, encouraged him in his design of attempting to regain his government, and with many promises of assistance when it should be in his power, sent him back to England with letters of recommendation to some of his ministers and great men;

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in which he gave an authority to the King of Leinster to enlist all such as were willing to enter into his service and to carry them over to Ireland.

With these gracious assurances, and these letters, returned DERMOD to Bristol; where causing them to be communicated to the chief men of the city, he offered good entertainment and great pay to all such as would go with him; and if they restored him to his crown and province, to settle lands upon them for ever. RICHARD son of GILBERT Earl of Pembroke surnamed Strongbow, a young nobleman of equal valour and ambition, hearing of these offers of the King of Leinster, conferred with him on the subject; and on DERMOD's assurance of giving him his daughter EVA in marriage together with his whole inheritance and the succession to his province if he recovered it, he entered into an alliance with the Irish Prince, and engaged to repair to him in the spring with a band of chosen men who should restore him to his dominions. No sooner had DERMOD contracted this alliance so flattering to his hopes, than he put himself on his return home through Wales. But whilst he was waiting at St. David's head for a fair wind, he heard of a military man of great fame and valour, ROB. FITZ STEPHENS, imprisoned by the Prince of Wales, whom he was desirous to get enlarged and to retain in his service against his rebellious subjects. To this end he made application, by the Bishop of St. Davids and MAURICE FITZ GERALD brother in law to the prisoner, to the Prince of Wales; who as well to favour the cause of an exiled King deprived of his dominions, as to rid the country of a troublesome factious man, consented to release him; on condition that he should assist the King of Leinster in the spring attended by his followers, and that DERMOD should provide for him in his province, if he proved successful, to the height of his ambition.

This negotiation having succeeded as well as the former, there was nothing left for DERMOD to do, but to make use of the time during the winter, in such a manner as to avail himself of the aid of the English, when they should land upon his coasts. To this purpose he went over into Ireland in disguise, and confiding in the loyalty of his Monks at Fernes, he privately repaired thither; where discovering himself to them,
they

RODERIC. they promised to conceal him till his designs could be put in execution. By the aid and intrigues of these religious, his friends and adherents were spirited up and encreased; some forces were privately engaged against the spring; and the winter passed away in forming plans for his restoration. He dispatched MAURICE REGAN his secretary into Wales—from whose original fragment the following account is chiefly taken—with an authority to promise in his name, to all such as would serve him, and remain in Ireland, a great recompence of lands of inheritance; and to those that would return, he would give them good entertainment in money or cattle. Whilst these measures were pursuing on the side of DERMOD in Ireland, FITZ STEPHEN in Wales and England was not idle. His affairs having been desperate for some time, his followers were much diminished: to all these however he made promises they should share his fortune, which he expected would be considerable; and having finished his preparations, and raised all the forces he was able, in the spring he arrived with them on the borders of the county of Wexford. The number he took with him seemed very unequal to the undertaking; for it consisted of no more than thirty Knights, fifty Gentlemen, and three hundred soldiers: and it is one of those instances which shew the over-ruling hand of Providence in the affairs of states and kingdoms.

A. D. 1169. Immediately upon their landing, a messenger was sent with the news to the King of Leinster by FITZ STEPHEN, with whom he had held a correspondence; upon which notice was given to all the friends and adherents of DERMOD to join him with the forces they had in readiness in all the haste and privacy that was possible. For with such an handful of auxiliaries, and with the small band that his friends could raise, it was in vain to think of making any other impression than what could be done by surprize. With about five hundred men that followed the fortunes of DERMOD, he marched to join the English, without giving his enemies time to oppose him: and it was resolved in a council of war, immediately to make an attempt on the city of Wexford. But no sooner were the troops drawn up before the place, than the inhabitants, being unprepared to make any defence, opened their gates; and being desirous to preserve the place, and to prevent their houses from being plundered, they
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sent hostages to their King, as a security for their submission, and for the payment of an annual tribute, which they voluntarily engaged in. These conditions were no sooner offered, than they were accepted by **DERMOD**; who, in order to fulfill his promise to **FITZ STEPHEN**, and to obtain further assistance from him, gave him the tribute, and the duties arising from the town of Wexford, with two cantreds of land adjoining.

This affair having been adjusted, and more forces arriving to the aid of the King of Leinster, on the news of this success, he thought himself in a condition to attack the King of Ossory, who had been of the number of his enemies, and whom he was therefore desirous to chastise. But when they were entered into the country, he found that this King had prepared for his defence, by throwing up deep and large entrenchments, with hedges at the top, manned with five thousand men. Nevertheless, the troops of **DERMOD** assailed them, and a bloody contest ensued, which lasted from morning till night: at last, by the valour of the English, the trenches were forced, and the army of Ossory routed, though not without a considerable slaughter of the enemy. The King of Leinster, who knew the country, being apprehensive of a defile through which his forces were to pass upon their retreat, informed the English Generals of the danger, and put himself, for the security of his person, among their troops; who did not mingle with the Irish. When they came to the defile, the vanguard was attacked with great fury, and were obliged to fall a little back; but after an obstinate fight of three hours, and a manœuvre suggested by **MAURICE PRENDERGAST**, one of the English Generals, the Ossorians were beaten with a great loss in killed and wounded. Having rested and refreshed his army, and made incursions into some neighbouring territories for the sake of plunder, **DERMOD** made a proposal to invade Ossory again, and utterly to destroy the King of that Country, against whom he bore a mortal hatred. The proposal was no sooner made than executed; and though the King of Ossory had thrown up entrenchments as before, which held the enemy at bay for three days, they were at last forced by the English, and the troops of the country were put to flight. This sudden and unexpected success of the King of Leinster, and the military renown of his English subsidies—all which we may be sure

RODERIC. was greatly magnified, as it is usual in such cases—had by this time spread over the island, and alarmed the inhabitants. The Monarch convened an assembly of the States; in which it was resolved, that every province should furnish a proportionable number of troops to be added to the royal army; in order to enable the King of Ireland to quell this insurrection in its infancy, to confine DERMOD within his territories, and to drive the English out of the kingdom.

This resolution having been executed with all imaginable dispatch, RODERIC the Monarch marched at the head of a great army, directly to the quarters of the King of Leinster, intending immediately to give him battle. In some manuscript annals—called the Annals of DUDLY LOFTUS—which I copied at S. Sepulchre's Library, it is said, that RODERIC, by a public proclamation, declared DERMOD deprived of all his possessions, titles, honours, prerogatives, and regalities, pronouncing the same confiscated, and all his goods and confederates proscribed: but that DERMOD soon after left Dublin, and met the King of Ireland in the county of Corke, where he gave him his own desire in pledges, and gave to O ROURK in lieu of his wife, twenty-five nobles in gold." The other historians tell us, that the King of Leinster not being able to face the royal army, withdrew with his forces into the woods and fastnesses near Ferns, which they were well acquainted with; that the Monarch summoned FITZ STEPHEN to leave the kingdom, and take all his foreigners with him; that on his refusal, RODERIC divided his army into small bodies, in order to enter the woods and drive them out, or to put all they met with to the sword; that the Clergy interposed, and by their mediation, a treaty of peace was made with the King of Leinster; in which it was stipulated, that he should be restored to the government of his province in as full extent as any of his predecessors had enjoyed, and that he should give hostages of the first quality to the Monarch, to secure the kingdom from further troubles, and from his protection and assistance to any foreigners. These conditions being accepted, we are told, that DERMOD delivered up to the Monarch, his natural son and six other hostages; and for the injury done to O ROURK, by taking away his wife, that he paid an hundred ounces of gold.

Whether

Whether any measures were taken with his auxiliary English troops, RODERIC. in order to compell them to quit the island, or whether the Monarch was satisfied with the King of Leinster's engagement to withdraw his protection from them, no historian hath informed us. It is certain, however, I believe, that they did not leave the kingdom: and in whatever way this treaty of peace was made, the hopes of tranquillity from it were soon blasted. For in a short time after, MAURICE FITZ GERALD above-mentioned, accompanied with ten Knights, thirty Gentlemen, and an hundred soldiers, arrived at Wexford; and notifying his arrival to his brother-in-law, who was then erecting a port within two miles of that place, they concerted the design of establishing themselves in Ireland, and of prevailing on the King of Leinster to break the treaty of peace. Very little pains were necessary to induce DERMOD to act a part so dishonourable and perfidious: and yet he was restored by it to the same condition in which he was before the war; and the same that any King of Leinster had ever enjoyed. But a spirit of ambition is not to be restrained by reasonable considerations, if there is no higher principle to controul it. He had smarted under the severity of being driven from his dominions and his native country, as an exile, of being obliged to implore the assistance of a foreign Prince, and even of soldiers of fortune to re-instate him. This had been effected when his enemies were greatly superior to him in the field; and the condescension which was shewn him in compassion to his subjects and his country, might be interpreted perhaps into fear of his English subsidies.

As soon, however, as DERMOD could get his army again together, regardless of the hostages he had given, regardless of his country, and of every social, every sacred tie, without any pretence for making war, and without any declaration of it, he marched with his new General, and all his troops into Fingall, which he destroyed with fire and sword. These hostilities alarming the inhabitants of the city of Dublin, they resolved to make their peace with the King of Leinster at any rate, that they might save themselves from being plundered. To this purpose they sent many rich presents into his camp, and a promise by their hostages to submit to

RODERIC.

any tribute he should think fit to impose. With this course of success, and his arms increasing by the reputation of it, the ambition of DERMOD became more violent and licentious. He would at first have compounded gladly for the restoration of his government, and all his former honours and privileges, of which the Monarch had deprived him: and to be sure, when he solicited the aid of the King of England and his generals, he meant nothing more. But this point having been gained, and there being nothing left for him to fear, but much to hope for, he was determined to push his conquests, as far as they could be carried, if it were to the throne itself. This ambition was greatly flattered by the reflexion, that many of his own ancestors had worn the crown of Ireland: and therefore he thought he had nothing more to do, than to procure further assistance from England, and the approbation of his two generals, in order to possess himself of the monarchy.

Full of this design, he consulted the English Generals; and that he might secure their zeal in serving it, he offered his daughter in marriage to either of them that would accept her: but as they knew of his contract with the Earl of PEMBROKE, they both refused his offer, and contented themselves with the prospect of such establishments in the kingdom, as it should be in his power, if they helped to lift him into the throne, to confer upon them. It does not appear that either of these Englishmen refused the Princess on a point of honour, but through motives of policy and discretion. They were sensible that the King of Leinster could never accomplish the design which he had in hand, with his own troops and theirs; and therefore, without further assistance, instead of raising him to the throne, and procuring a noble settlement for themselves, the attempt would probably end in the destruction of them all. The King of England, as glad as he might be to fish in these troubled waters, was too much embroiled with his affairs in France at that time to think of any other; and there was no resource left but in the Earl of PEMBROKE; with whom DERMOD had already contracted to give his daughter in marriage, and to make him heir of his dominions, in consideration of the Earl's assistance to restore him to his province. It was therefore the advice of the two Generals not to let his design transpire till he was in a capacity

capacity to put it into execution ; and in order to this end, that he should write a letter to the Earl, informing him of the great success he had already met with, and of his further hopes. In short they advised the King of Leinster to be very open and explicit with STRONGBOW, who had very powerful interest in his country, and was himself a leader of consummate conduct and experience ; upon whom all his expectations of the monarchy must depend, and to whom his offers of reward could not be too considerable. RODERIC.

A letter, in consequence of this advice, was dispatched by DERMOD to the Earl ; assuring him of the performance of his former promise with regard to his daughter, and the inheritance of his estates in Leinster, if his Lordship would bring him a sufficient force to set the crown of Ireland upon his head. Having made some preparations towards fulfilling his engagement with the King of Leinster, the Earl, on receiving this letter, applied to HENRY for his permission to leave the kingdom, together with his friends and followers, and to try their fortunes in Ireland. The King, being unwilling to irritate such a Nobleman with a denial, or to permit him to conquer for another Monarch, a country which he intended to conquer for himself, gave no positive answer to the application. The Earl interpreting this duplicity, which he did not understand, into a token of the King's consent, bestirred himself with great vigour, in making every thing ready for his Irish expedition. Whilst these preparations were making, he sent an answer to DERMOD, by two of his chief officers, REYMOND DE LA GROSE and WIL. FITZGERALD, brother of MAURICE above-mentioned, in order not only to signify his intention of accepting the King's offer, but also to be well assured of a prospect of success from their information. These officers carried with them a small train of chosen well-disciplined troops, not amounting to fourscore, with which they landed about five miles from Waterford. But not knowing how to bestow themselves till they had notified their arrival to the King of Leinster, and received his directions how to proceed, they threw up a small fort in haste, as strong as they could make it with fods and stones, to defend themselves from any insults of the inhabitants in the country adjoining to it. When the inhabitants per-

RODERIC. ceived that the English were settling in their neighbourhood, a consultation was held among them, how to guard against the danger of so near an enemy; and it was resolved to attack the fort before it was perfected, and before the enemy had received any reinforcement.

The resolution, it must be owned, was not a bad one, had it been executed in the manner which such a resolution required. But tho' haste was one necessary circumstance in the execution, yet it was not the only one; and the inhabitants failed in this attempt through want of attention to any other. Instead of procuring a sufficient number of veteran troops to oppose to these experienced warriors, they contented themselves with picking up two hundred such men as they could instantly get together [*a*], and with these to attack the English in their fort. DE LA GROSE perceiving this body of men advancing towards them, was on his side guilty of an indiscretion, in leading his men out of the fort to charge a superior number. But perhaps he held them in contempt, from the disorderly manner in which they marched. They received the charge however with so good a countenance, and returned it with so much vigour, as convinced him of his mistake; and he was not in so much haste to attack them, as he was now to regain the fort. But the Irish pursued and charged his rear so hotly, that, finding it impossible to regain it, he was obliged to face about: and being made desperate by their situation, they fought with such irresistible and astonishing fury, as obliged the Irish to give way, and seek their safety in their flight.

A.D. 1170. In a short time after, the Earl of PEMBROKE — known more commonly by the name of Strongbow — with two hundred Knights, and a thousand Gentlemen, armed with cross-bows, landed at Waterford, without the city [*b*]. As soon as the King of Leinster had notice of their arrival, he marched with great joy at the head of his English auxiliaries,

[*a*] REGAN says, three or four thousand, which is incredible; because he adds, a thousand were slain, and seventy taken prisoners, whom REDMOND caused to be beheaded; and yet owns that the English did not exceed an hundred.

[*b*] REGAN calls them 15 or 1600; and says, that they besieged and took the town before they sent to DERMOD.

to pay his compliments to the Earl, and to settle the plan of their operations. After the usual ceremonies had passed between them, a general council of war was called; in which it was determined to lose no time in coming to action; and as they were incamped under the walls of Waterford, that the siege of that place should be immediately undertaken. The next day the army sat down before it in form; and though the inhabitants made as good a defence, as an ungarrisoned town without cannon might be expected to do, yet they were so vigorously pressed by the English, that they soon took it by storm. In the first fury of the soldiers, they destroyed all they met with, and gave no quarter; but this was soon restrained by their commander, and they were content with plunder.

RODERIC

When DERMOD found himself in quiet possession of this town, by the aid of STRONGBOW, which he thought an omen of good success, he sent for his daughter and married her to the Earl, according to his contract, with all the solemnity that the place and the confusion of the time admitted of. The nuptial rites having been performed, the army marched towards Dublin, in order to secure themselves of the capital of the kingdom, as well as to possess themselves of the richest booty. The inhabitants, it is true, had bought their peace the year before, and had done nothing since to break the treaty; but this, with a Prince of DERMOD's perfidious temper, possessed of power, was a point of no signification. The citizens of Dublin were now at his mercy, and he was resolved that they should feel the rod of his resentment for past offences; which, notwithstanding the peace he had made when he could do nothing better, he had not forgiven. In order to give a check to this insulting enterprise, and prevent further mischief, the Monarch made a shew of opposing the allied army in their march: but they observed so much discipline and regularity, that it was thought adviseable not to attack them; and RODERIC disbanded his army, and returned to his own country.

As soon as DERMOD had invested Dublin, the inhabitants of which were thrown into the utmost consternation, he sent M. REGAN to summon them to surrender the city, and to demand thirty hostages for their performance

RODERIC.

performance of the articles he should insist on. The Danish governor, being unwilling to abide the issue of a siege, assented to the demand ; but the citizens not agreeing about the hostages, and MILES COGAN one of the Generals of the English, who was posted on the other side the town, and knew nothing of the capitulation, had made such a breach in the walls that his men entered the town, and made themselves masters of it, before DERMOD and the King knew any thing of the matter. They entered the city the same day, and found a great quantity of provisions as well as valuable plunder of all forts.

According to an observation which seems to be well founded, that the man who injures another never forgives him, DERMOD having carried off the wife of O ROURK the King of Breffny, as we have seen, now led the troops into his territory and destroyed it with fire and sword. RODERIC the King of Ireland, and all the other Princes and chiefs, were by this time alarmed at the success of the King of Leinster, and his English subsidies ; and the reader perhaps may be of opinion, that they should have taken the alarm a little sooner. Even now before the Monarch would take the field against him, he sent an officer to DERMOD to expostulate with him on his perfidy, and to assure him that if he did not return immediately within the terms of his treaty, RODERIC would send him his son's head, lay him under a public interdict, and again oblige him to leave the kingdom. But the Monarch should have considered, that the situation of the King of Leinster was become very different : all the forces of the island, and even the nobles and chiefs of his own province, for the most part, then took the side against him, and he had only an inconsiderable party to oppose to them : whereas now he had beside the English, which were most of them above the rank of common men, a good body of Irish who had attached themselves to him on his late successes and his foreign aid, which gave them a prospect of his triumphing over all his enemies.

It is not therefore to be wondered at, that a man of DERMOD's cast of mind, when he found his affairs in so prosperous a condition, should reject the Monarch's proposal with contempt and insolence : it is rather to be wondered at, that RODERIC should have given him leisure and opportunity to
strengthen

strengthen himself in this manner; and that at the late peace he had concluded with him, his English subsidies should have been permitted to remain in the island. Without knowing more of the circumstances than are transmitted down, one can resolve this negligence and inattention into nothing but the destination of their final overthrow at this period. The King of Leinster, whose ambition was now in a fair way to be gratified, returned an answer to RODERIC by retorting his threat upon him; that instead of dismissing the English, he would send into their country for a reinforcement; that he would not lay down his arms 'till he had reduced the whole island under his own authority; and that if the Monarch struck off his son's head or made any of his hostages suffer, he would revenge it by hostilities yet unheard of, which should end in the destruction of RODERIC and all his race.

As much astonished and incensed as RODERIC was at this answer, yet upon mature deliberation he desisted from his purpose of executing the hostage, as not knowing the turn which the fortune of war might take. Indeed the fame of the English Generals, and the execution done by the Cross-bows, which were an instrument of war unknown to the Irish, had struck such a terror over the island, that the authority of the Monarch, as well as the liberties of his country, began very much to decline. The time was now approaching, when the spirit of discord and contention, which had prevailed through many ages without a cure, was now, on a private quarrel, and on an invasion of foreigners with a force scarce sufficient to take a single town, to annihilate their monarchy;—a monarchy which amidst much greater dissensions, and invasions vastly more irresistible, had supported itself above two thousand years. But the man, whose ill desert had banished him from his country, whose revenge had invited foreigners to his aid, and whose ambition after the monarchy had occasioned its dissolution, was not permitted to possess it; nor to see the glory of his country perish in the flames which he had kindled by his ungoverned passions. For in the midst of his successes, when the throne was almost within his reach, and he thought himself sure of all that his heart could wish for, death took him out of the world, and laid him low in the dust. Thus ended the wild ambition of DERMOD King of Leinster; leaving a memorable example of the folly of human vanity.

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The Earl of PEMBROKE immediately assumed the government of the province, as well as the inheritance of his estate, in right of his daughter EVA, whom the Earl had married, or rather perhaps, to speak more truly, by virtue of the army that was so formidable, of which he was now commander in chief. Taking advantage therefore of the terror which he saw his arms had spread all over Ireland, he marched immediately to Dublin to get his right recognised in that capital of his province and of the kingdom. But RODERIC perceiving that none of the Irish chiefs adhered to the Earl of PEMBROKE after the death of DERMOD, except one of his natural sons and two petty Princes, thought at last of doing what he should have done long before, of driving the English out of the island. To this purpose he levied a great army—if REGAN is to be credited, to the number of sixty thousand—with a design to besiege Dublin. Other writers attribute this patriotic zeal to LAWRENCE its Archbishop, who took infinite pains, they say, to cement an union between the Princes of Ireland, and to animate them to this attempt in favour of their country. This great armament could not be made without the knowledge of the Earl; and he was not backward in preparing every thing in his power necessary for his defence: he sent for a reinforcement from their garrison towns, and he made large promises to such of the Irish as would lift under his banner. FITZ STEPHEN, governor of Wexford, having detached a party to the Earl's assistance, the inhabitants thought this a good opportunity to revenge themselves of this oppressive Englishman; and with the slaughter of several of his men, they took him and five of his officers prisoners.

The city of Dublin being environed with the Irish forces by land and sea, and the besieged being not provided either with ammunition, men, or provision in a sufficient quantity for any long defence, the Earl called a council of war of his principal officers; and representing to them the great force of the enemy and their own distress, proposed to offer terms of capitulation to the Monarch by the Archbishop, to submit and hold Leinster as a feudatory Prince under RODERIC, if he would raise the siege and march off with his army. The Earl's proposal was assented to, and the Archbishop was employed to treat with the Monarch on these terms: but the Irish imagined that they had

had got them all within their net, and they had nothing to do but to draw it over them. The Monarch's answer therefore was, that unless the Earl of PEMBROKE would surrender to him the cities of Dublin, Waterford, and Wexford, with all his forts and castles, and on a day agreed upon abandon the island with all the English, he would instantly make the assault and take the place by storm. When the archbishop reported these terms to the council of war, they who had so lately been the conquerors and carried all before them, became confounded and depressed: they were loth to submit to terms so ignominious, and yet they saw no relief without them. But M. COGAN perceiving the impression which this answer was likely to make, with great spirit said, "we are a considerable number of good men; our best remedy is to make a sally which is least suspected by the enemy; and I hope in the goodness of GOD that we shall have the victory, or at least die with honour: and my desire is that I may be the first man appointed to give upon their quarter."

This noble resolution and intrepidity being applauded by the whole council—for as the pannick of one man is catching, so the valour of one will often inspire others with it—the Generals were directed to draw up their men with all possible expedition. The command of the van-guard was assigned to COGAN as he had desired, the center to R. DE LA GROSE, and the rear to the Earl of PEMBROKE, each body consisting only of two hundred: for the Irish, of whose valour and fidelity they had no opinion, were left behind in the garrison. In this enterprize full of peril, they directed their march, says REGAN, to the enemies camp: but if the enemies camp consisted, as he said before, of sixty thousand men, it was not only full of peril, but full of absurdity also surely for six hundred men to attack it; even if the enemy were careless and secure and expected no such thing. Indeed it appears to me so very absurd and romantic as not to be credited: and the incredibility is confirmed in what follows of their success, that they broke furiously into their camp, and made such a slaughter as all fled before them; which slaughter is expressly said to be one hundred and fifty of the Irish, and one man only on the side of the English. Some mistake of the number must have happened by the transcriber or the printer: and even to make an attempt upon a camp of Six thousand with six hundred only, though their desperate situation

RODERIC. might have prompted them to it, could scarcely have been made, one would think with such success, as to oblige them to abandon it with all their baggage and provision and to raise the siege, when they had lost only an hundred and fifty men. But this is the account which is given by REGAN.

The city of Dublin being thus delivered from the danger it had been in, the Earl left it under the care of COGAN, and marched towards Wexford to release his friend FITS STEPHEN, and the officers taken prisoners with him. But the inhabitants being apprised of his approach, set the town on fire, as soon as they had taken out the prisoners and best effects, and removed to an island in its neighbourhood where they knew themselves to be safe; by which the intention of the Earl was frustrated in that particular. In his march he was attacked by O RYAN, the chief of a territory through which he passed; and the fortune of the day seemed against him, 'till O RYAN was killed by a Monk in the Earl's army; at whose fall the Irish were disconcerted and retreated from the field of battle. Here the English writers inform us that the only son of STRONGBOW, a youth of seventeen years of age, being greatly terrified with the number and the noise of the Irish, fled towards Dublin; but hearing of his father's victory he returned to congratulate his success: and if the Earl caused him to be immediately executed for his cowardice by cutting him in two with a sword, as these writers say, it equalled any thing that is to be met with among the most savage barbarous Irish in their pagan ignorance.

When the news of these extraordinary successes of the English Generals was brought over hither, HENRY, who never dreamed of their being able to effect any thing more than a diversion in favour of the King of Leinster, became alarmed and jealous. He had imagined that they would be able only to execute the revenge of DERMOD on the petty Princes of his province; and that when they should attempt any thing further upon that success, they would be obliged to him for his assistance: this application would furnish him with a pretence of going over to Ireland himself, and pursuing the design which he had for some time had in his thoughts of making a conquest of that island.

But

But when he found that **DERMOD** was dead, that the Irish made little or no resistance, that **STRONGBOW** had seized upon the province of Leinster, and that he and the other Generals were daily getting ground, he began to suspect that they would make themselves masters of the island which he had intended for himself. Possessed of this fear, he published a proclamation, “ that no ship or vessel should go to any part of Ireland with ammunition or provision, or to carry on any commerce of any kind ; and at the same time, requiring all his subjects in that kingdom, of whatever rank or degree, to return home immediately, upon the penalty of forfeiting all their estates and effects in England, and of being declared rebels and traitors.” This proclamation, which was issued under a pretence that the adventurers had engaged in the undertaking without his permission, had all the effect which he expected from it. For though the Generals did not choose to throw up a game which was in their hands, and from which they might reap advantages far greater than those they had to look for here, yet they were afraid of exasperating the King ; who, they knew, had it in his power, and would not want the will, effectually to crush them. They immediately therefore sent **DE LA-GROSE** over to make their submission to his Majesty, and to acquaint him that they were so far from having any intention of withdrawing their allegiance from him, that all the conquests they made were made in his name, and should all be subject to his authority. But this submission did not content the King. **DE LA-GROSE** was sent back with letters to the Earl of **PEMBROKE**, requiring him to repair to England without any delay, and to give an account of his conduct in person to his Majesty. As much as this absence must retard the progress of his arms in Ireland, the Earl durst not disobey the summons. When he came into the King’s presence, he pleaded his permission to espouse the cause of **DERMOD** : and after giving him a full account of the situation of affairs in Ireland, he offered to deliver up to **HENRY** the possession of Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, and all the sea ports and other places they had conquered, and to hold nothing for themselves but on the condition of doing homage to the King and his successors for ever. **HENRY** approving these conditions, sent the Earl back into Ireland : with an assurance of following him soon with a large army that should compleat the conquest of that kingdom. Indeed the conquest of it

RODRIC.

RODERIC. was then become so easy, through the circumstances already mentioned, and a surprising reverse of temper in the Irish Princes, that it did not require the forces which he carried with him the next October, and landed at Waterford from four hundred ships, to receive the homage and submission of all the Kings in the island; and who seemed to strive in emulation of each other who should be the first to pay their duty to him. Thus without striking a blow, or spilling a drop of blood, HENRY the second annexed a kingdom to the crown of England, which had existed under a monarchy two thousand years, and that had been possessed by a race of Kings as valiant and high spirited as had been ever known throughout the world. Such were the fatal effects of the abuse of liberty by the licentiousness of faction: and as the same, or nearly the same effects will always follow from the same causes, so the history of this people is a monument of instruction to every state that is yet free; very powerfully illustrating the truth of that assertion, if it could be doubted of, “that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.”

Having brought down the account of the civil or political transactions of Ireland to this period, I must now give the reader a view of the state of religion and learning in it, from the beginning of the eleventh century to the dissolution of their monarchy; which will point out a natural conclusion to this volume. It hath already been mentioned, that in the reign of MORTOGH the third, called MORTOGH O BRIAN, three national synods, or as some writers think, one synod continued by several prorogations, were summoned by this Prince; the particulars of which must now be given. In the first of these assemblies, which consisted of the Monarch and all the Princes and clergy of his southern half of the kingdom, it is only said, that many wholesome laws and regulations were established both for the church and state. In the second, which appears to have been a convocation of the clergy only, at which the bishop of Limerick the Pope's legate presided, it was agreed that there should be twelve episcopal Sees in the southern half, the same number in the northern, and two in the country of Meath. In this ecclesiastical division, the See of Dublin is not mentioned; because its inhabitants being generally the descendants of the Danes or Normans, their Bishop at that time received his consecration at the hands of his countryman the

the Archbishop of Canterbury. The See of Waterford was erected at the desire of this synod; the members of which subscribed an epistle to ANSELM Archbishop of Canterbury, informing him “that it was convenient to erect Waterford into a bishoprick, for which”—being another settlement of the Danes and their descendents—“they had elected and sent MALCHUS to him, in regard to the primacy he had over them, to be consecrated;” which was done accordingly. I have not thought it convenient, nor of importance enough, to clog this history with an account of the names, successions, and deaths of the Irish Bishops: and whoever has a curiosity for such sort of reading, may indulge it by looking into WARE’s account of them enlarged by HARRIS into a folio: a proof of the great industry, but not of the judgment of those writers. In the third synod or convocation, at which it is said that twenty five Bishops assisted, the boundaries of the several dioceses were determined and specified; as a sanction to which, they leave their own and God’s blessing upon all the succeeding Bishops who should support the regulations ordained in that synod, and dreadful imprecations on those who should presume to violate them. The only reflexion which I shall make upon these synods is, that we have never before heard of a Pope’s legate in Ireland, and that we should not probably have heard of it now, if DONOGH the son of BRIAN had not carried the crown of Ireland to Rome, and as far as lay in his power—which God knows was none at all—made a present of the sovereignty of the island to his Holiness. As insignificant and ridiculous as this donation was, it served the Popes for a pretence to claim an authority and a jurisdiction; not only in this instance of sending a legate and regulating the episcopal Sees, but, as we shall see in the next volume, of making over the sovereignty to the King of England.

In the reign of MORTOGH the fourth, surnamed O Lachlin, the ecclesiastical state of Ireland received a considerable alteration in a synod which he called at Kells; with a view, it is said, to consult measures for the better propagation of the Christian Faith, for the more effectual edification of the people, and for appointing two more Archbishops. From the first establishment of Christianity in that island there had been till this time but two Archbishops, at Ardmagh, and Cashell; and these had been consecrated by St. PATRICK. But they do not appear from any testimony, manuscript
or

or printed, to have had any authority primatial or metropolitical; and were Archbishops only in name. It is very certain however, that all the authority they were cloathed with, they had assumed themselves, or was given them by the church; and that none of them 'till now had received the pall from Rome. How early the Popes took up the usage of sending a pall in imitation of the Emperors is uncertain: but the earliest account to be relied on, is in the epistles of GREGORY the great, where it is plain that giving the pall, was intended only as a mark of honour and respect, not to make a Prelate an Archbishop, or to erect a metropolitical jurisdiction, but as an honorary recognition of the character he was possessed of. The necessity of the pall therefore had not been heard of to this day, if his successors had not improved upon his plan, and learned in after ages to make use of it as an artifice to encrease their wealth and power. But this is further explained in the Introduction; to which the reader is referred.

A. D. 1152.

When the Popes had once begun to assert a jurisdiction over the Irish nation, we may be sure they would never fail to find occasions of using it. Thus as the palls had never yet been sent to their Archbishops, this was a good opportunity for the court of Rome to make the Irish church dependant upon it: and to add to the splendor of the ceremony, as well as to exert their authority still more, it was determined to establish two other Archbishopricks, and to send Cardinal PAPIRON with the four palls. Accordingly in the synod above-mentioned, the Sees of Dublin and Tuam were erected into Archbishopricks, Ardmagh was constituted the primacy, the four palls were delivered with the usual ceremonies, and some canons passed about the payment of tithes by divine right, and against incontinence, prophaneness, and other vices. These are all the regulations that I find made in this period relating to religion: and these being made so late as the middle of the twelfth century, we may learn, that 'till then the church of Ireland had been free and independent, and owned no other subjection to the See of Rome than what was founded on gratitude and civility; and consistent with the power which the canons of the first general councils allowed to every national church in christendom. Three other synods were held by the primate and clergy after this, for the reformation of discipline and manners, but nothing was transacted in them material enough to be taken notice of in this work, ex-

cept in the last held at Ardmagh in the year eleven hundred and seventy: The intention of calling this synod, was, to enquire into the cause of the arrival of strangers from England into their country to invade it: and the result of their deliberations ended in this opinion, that the sins of the people had subjected them to the vengeance of Heaven, especially the practise of buying English children and making them slaves. CAMBRENSIS, Bishop of S. Davids who gives this account, adds, “ that the English by a common vice of their country, had a custom to sell their children and kinsfolks into Ireland, although they were neither in want nor extreme poverty”. The English reader, after this, must never charge the Irish of that age with being rude and barbarous; because he will be bid to look at home.

Notwithstanding all the dissensions which followed the death of BRIAN, a great number of monasteries were built and endowed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; in order to repair the waste made upon those religious houses by the ravages of the Danes, and their own intestine subsequent broils. In these the clergy were not interested, except as mediators, frequently to heal the breaches made by a spirit of ambition, agitated, if not raised by faction. The clergy were therefore at full liberty to solicit the aid of the Princes and Prelates towards re-establishing these schools of learning and religion, by which they might reform the ignorance and barbarism which had crept in among the people. We find in the same period also, that with this ignorance, superstition as usual had made its way: and several of their Princes, when they had done all the mischief they could do to their country at the head of faction, as they advanced in years, and grew weary of the toils of war, retired into cells to end their days in a monastic habit and devotion; as an attonement that would set every thing right at last. But this is no reproach to the religion of those times in Ireland. The same superstition, though in a different mode, hath prevailed in all ages and nations: and whilst mankind continue corrupted by their own inventions, the means will still be used for the end, and the shadow take place of the substance of religion.

The reader will find there was great occasion for the restitution of schools of learning and religion in those disastrous times, when the face
of

of the Irish Church was so deformed, “ that all ecclesiastical discipline, and the canons of the church, were trodden under foot, the sacraments neglected as of no use, and the metropolitan See of Ardmagh itself, sometimes made a mere lay fee, or temporal inheritance, but possessed hereditarily by the power of one family for fifteen generations.” But yet, during the times of these unordained Archbishops, there were others, who were only reckoned suffragans or coadjutors to the intruders, who performed all the episcopal duties. Amidst the continual contentions for the monarchy, on the death of MALACHY, it was impossible that learning or religion should keep its ground. The outlines might be preserved in the monasteries and abbeys, where the clergy were unmolested, but little more could be looked for, when their country was universally involved in such distractions. Few writers therefore of any name are to be found in this turbulent period. MARIANUS SCOTUS, a chronologer of the first rank, was born in the beginning of the 11th century, and wrote an universal chronicle of his time. He retired from the world about the middle of it, and exchanged the air of Ireland for that of Germany; where he shut himself up in a convent at Cologne, afterwards at Fulda, and ended his days at Mentz. He wrote, besides the Chronicle above-mentioned, the Harmony of the Evangelists, Amendments to DIONYSIUS, of the great Pascal Cycle, Annotations on the Scriptures, Commentaries on the Psalms, a Notitia of both empires, and some other Tracts. Besides him, we find only TIGERNACH, who wrote the Annals of Ulster, in the eleventh century, and MELISA of Munster, the author of some philosophical works that have transmitted his name down to posterity.

The writers in the twelfth century, before the conquest, are more considerable; GILBERT Bishop of Limerick, and the Pope's Legate in the synod mentioned in the reign of MORTOGH O BRIAN, wrote some Epistles, and a book of the State of the Church, published by USHER. But the most celebrated man of this time, and almost the only one who deserves particular notice, was MALACHY O MORGAR, Archbishop of Ardmagh, who wrote many Epistles to BERNARD, a book of general Constitutions, of the Laws of Celebacy, of Traditions, the Life of CUTHBERT, an Epistle to DAVID King of the Scots, and a Prophecy of the Popes of Rome.

He built a stone oratory at Bangor in Ireland, like what he had seen in other countries, which is said to be the first of the sort erected in that kingdom ; which can be only meant of an oratory, if that is true which is mentioned in the office of S. KENAN, extant in manuscript in the public library at Cambridge, “ that he built a Church of stone in the country of Tyrone, in the infancy of Christianity ;” but this is doubted ; and the first building of stone in Ireland is thought to be that of MALACHY above-mentioned ; notwithstanding the plausible explanation of that passage by Mr. HARRIS, mentioned in the Introduction. Were I to relate all the endowments, the virtues, the labours, and the miracles, said to be wrought by that wonderful man, who was born of noble parents, in the province of Ulster, and died in the middle of the twelfth century, I must transcribe his life, written by BERNARD, his cotemporary and intimate friend ; a life so far above human nature, that, unless we will suppose he was all along divinely illuminated and supported, as he must be if he worked the miracles there recorded, it is impossible for a man of sense to give any credit to. In short, he was another S. PATRICK ; and it may be said, perhaps, with truth, that this last Apostle of the Irish, had all the zeal, the piety, the heavenly-mindedness, and assiduity of the first.

There being no more men of eminence or learning in Ireland to be recorded before that country became appendant to the crown of England, we are now arrived at the end of the enlightened age, and of their ancient history ; which puts a period to this volume : and if the reader should be of opinion, that I have given only a dry imperfect account of that free and warlike people, he is desired to consider the early times it treats of, and the very scanty and defective materials—even supposing them to be good—which remain after a desolation scarce to be paralleled in any nation under the sun. There is matter enough however, I persuade myself, from which a sensible and a good man may draw entertainment and instruction : and in ages of barbarism and ignorance, and in a country secluded from all the rest of the world, the wonder is, not that better matter should not be given, but that better matter should be expected.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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